



# FORE TIMES

News for the Western Washington Taxicab Operators Association (WWTCOA) - Teamsters Local 117

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## Report from Olympia

# WWTCOA FIGHTS FOR CHANGES TO STATE LAW

Teamsters 117 helps taxis introduce three bills this legislative session



The 2013 legislative session in Olympia kicked off on January 14, and with the help of Teamsters 117, the **Western Washington Taxi Cab**

**Operators' Association (WWTCOA)** is pushing for changes to State law that would improve working conditions for taxicab operators.

### CRACKING DOWN ON FOR-HIRE VEHICLES AND TOWN CARS

As WWTCOA members are well aware, one of the most pressing issues facing taxis is the need for greater enforcement of for-hire vehicles and town cars in the city of Seattle.

Currently, the city does not have the authority to impose penalties that can deter for-hire vehicles and limos from engaging in illegal activity.

The WWTCOA Leadership Council, together with Teamsters 117, is working with key legislators to draft a bill that would grant municipalities, like Seattle, greater authority for enforcement of violations by limo or for-hire drivers. Under the proposal, repeat offenders would not be able to renew their licenses until their fines are paid.

### LABOR & INDUSTRIES UPDATE

The WWTCOA also plans to work with legislators to introduce a bill that would

mandate a change in classification for taxicab operators, which would impact their Labor & Industries insurance rates. Taxi operators are currently misclassified and must overpay at the same rate as armored car vehicle drivers and security guards.

### CITY COUNCIL STUDY

The WWTCOA is also requesting that the Legislature help fund a study to be conducted by the city of Seattle that would assess the number of taxis on the road and the current regulatory system. The results of such a study could persuade regulators to issue more licenses, especially for wheelchair cabs.

### TALK TO YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

Passing legislation at the State level is not an easy task. Taxicab operators throughout the industry must get involved and speak with their legislators about these critical issues.

To facilitate that process, Teamsters 117 has set up four lobby days throughout this year's legislative session. On lobby days, taxicab operators will have the opportunity to meet with their legislators in prearranged appointments set up by Local 117's Legislative Affairs Department.

**Local 117 Lobby days for 2013 will take place on January 31, March 21, February 21, and April 18. If you are interested in participating, please contact Dawn Gearhart at 206-794-6678.**

## Take Action!

### Lobby Days in Olympia



Our elected leaders have the power to make changes to State law that will improve working conditions for taxicab operators. Teamsters 117 has set up four lobby days throughout this year's legislative session so that you can get involved:

#### LOCAL 117 LOBBY DAYS - 2013

- January 31
- March 21
- February 21
- April 18

This is an opportunity for you to speak with your representatives about critical issues you face on the job.

On our first lobby day, which will be held on January 31, we will be meeting at 9am in the Pritchard Building in Olympia for a brief orientation before we head out to legislative appointments throughout the day.

**For more information, contact Dawn Gearhart at 206-794-6678.**



## UNFAIR CHANGES TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE!

**T**he Consumer Affairs division at the City of Seattle is proposing a number of unreasonable changes to the city's municipal code that would have a devastating impact on taxicab operators.

Under the proposed changes, taxis would be subject, for example, to steep fines and the possible suspension of their licenses if they do not maintain detailed records of individuals who issue complaints, including the person's name and phone number.

Some of the most damaging proposals include the following language:

- Authorizes 1 year for-hire license suspension when a licensee accumulates 2 class C violations in any 12 month period
- Director may suspend a taxicab license for 30 days if the licensee reaches 15 penalty points in 12 months
- Requires operators to maintain records on all complaints for 2 years at their association office including: name, telephone number, and gender for all passengers who make complaints. Class A- each requirement
- Taxicab must display a bumper sticker on the rear bumper stating "Complaints about this taxicab may be made to 206-296 TAXI"- Class A
- Prohibits WAT license renewal if licensee refuses more than 2 wheelchair trips in any 5 year period
- Provides 1 year license suspension to WAT endorsement on for-hire driver license if refuse 2 or more wheelchair trips in any 12 month period
- Requires taxicab vehicle licensees to report receipt of automated traffic safety camera violations (red lights tickets) within 2 days to the Director
- Provides a potential 1 year for-hire driver license suspension when a for-hire driver is arrested or charged with a crime against persons

In order to fight these changes, taxicab operators must get organized and speak with one voice. The WWTCOA Leadership Council has been meeting with elected officials to educate them on the harmful impact of enacting these proposals, but they need your help!

**FIGHT BACK NOW! We can stop these changes! Fight back and tell City Hall that taxicab operators need to have a say in changes that affect their businesses! Call Dawn Gearhart at 206-794-6678 if you are interested in meeting with City Council representatives.**

**MEMBERSHIP NOTES:** ID cards are designed and on the way! Cards will be distributed at the Orange Cab office, the Airport, and downtown taxi stands to paying members. Haven't seen WWTCOA on your credit card statement? You may need to update your membership info to be considered active. If you haven't filled out both a blue and white membership form, you are not a member of the WWTCOA. To become a member or update your information, visit: [teamstertaxicab.org](http://teamstertaxicab.org), [teamsters117.org](http://teamsters117.org) or the Local 117 office at 14675 Interurban Ave. S. If you're interested in participating in a monthly membership drive contact Dawn at 206-794-6678.

## Thank you!



*Taxis show their solidarity with airport workers on International Human Rights Day.*

**M**any thanks to the taxicab operators who showed their solidarity with airport workers who are struggling for better working conditions during the march and protest in recognition of **International Human Rights Day** on December 10.

Thanks also to the following WWTCOA members for their help on Christmas Eve and Christmas day on Local 117's strike line at United Natural Foods, Inc. (UNFI).

- Satpal Puriwal
- Salah Mohamed
- Jagjit Singh
- Mike Megenta
- Gurminder Kahlon

These individuals donated their time to hold the line so that striking members could spend the holiday with their families.



**Approximately 160 members of Teamsters Local 117 have been on strike at United Natural Foods, Inc. since December 10**

**as a result of the company's unlawful actions.**

**For more information about the strike, visit [www.UNFIDrivenByGreed.com](http://www.UNFIDrivenByGreed.com). You can also donate to the Teamsters 117 - UNFI Workers' Hardship Fund at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org).**