

D.C. Professional Taxicab Drivers Association, Inc.

2417 Evarts St. N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20018
202- 832-3002

Newsletter

October 2006

Volume 4

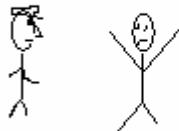
Editor - Hassan Abdur-Raheem

Caught in the Middle

By Nathan Price

During the last week of August through the first week of September 2006, taxicab drivers in the District were caught in a sting operation on Capitol Hill. Confusion and anger ran rampantly through the taxicab industry. The need to address this action became paramount to D.C.P.T.D.A. because taxicab drivers have been complaining for the past seven years about the discriminatory abuse from the local government.

Upon returning from vacation on September 4th, I was overwhelmed with calls and messages about a taxicab sting operation on Capitol Hill. Rumors pointed to a statement shown on CNN television by a U.S. Senator from Montana and the participation of a D.C. Hack Enforcement Officer at the D.C. Taxicab Commission. The fact was that only taxicabs were being stopped and if violations were found, the drivers were ticketed and some taxicabs were towed away.



Next time you better dot
your "I"s and cross your "T"s

A meeting was set with the Chairman of the District of Columbia Taxicab Commission (DCTC) on September 8, 2006 at ten in the morning. Members of the D.C.P.T.D.A. Attending the meeting were Carolyn Robinson, Charles Harrison and Nathan Price. We are interested in the involvement of the DCTC and its interpretation of the events surrounding the

sting exercise. The chairman of the DCTC, Causton Toney, explained that the U.S. Capitol Police Department had contacted the DCTC for their involvement. The members of the D.C.P.T.D.A. questioned as to why were taxicabs being singled out and stated that towing taxicabs away because of a lack of proof of insurance was illegal. Mr. Toney quoted Title-31 of the D.C. Municipal Regulations. The members of the D.C.P.T.D.A. placed exhibits in every phrase of having taxicab insurance to prove that other than a receipt for the weekly or bi-weekly payment, no other paperwork is valid. The insurance policy statement given to drivers at the end of 2005 expired at the end of June 2006, without a new statement being issued. Finally, we convinced Mr. Toney that our weekly or bi-weekly receipt is part of a driver's personal record and there is no rule and that there is no rule obligating a driver to keep this receipt in his or her possession, and that the insurance policy statement had technically expired. Mr. Toney then claimed that he had no authority over the insurance companies; therefore he was rendered helpless, except to ask the Insurance Division of the Department of Regulatory Affairs to intercede. We pointed out that DCMR Title-31 also holds his office with accountability. We asked that Mr. Toney call the Office of the Chief of the U.S. Capitol Police to stop any unjust ticketing and towing. He claimed that he would call later that day.

Because of a lack of trust that D.C.P.T.D.A. members Harrison and Price had for Mr. Toney, past encounters encouraged them to go directly to the Office of the Chief of the U.S. Capitol Police. During our short wait, we met taxicab driver Akenola R. Adetayo (Dial Cab # 55) who was also there to voice his displeasure of having his taxicab towed and showed later that he had proof of insurance in the form of a receipt. The three of us were met by Captain Tara Neeld. The

level of professionalism and respect by Captain Neddl was shocking, as well as pleasing. We explained the situation to her just as we had explained it to Mr. Toney. First, she disproved the rumor that the sting was the result of the comments made by the U.S. Senator from Montana, but rather by the actions of taxicab drivers creating illegal taxicab stands at the doors of the Senate office buildings on Constitution Avenue. Second, she said she discussed that matter with the Sergeant-of-Arms for the Senate. Third, she promised to look into the possibility of creating a legal taxicab stand on the Senate side and to work with the taxicab industry in the future. The D.C.P.T.D.A. implores that every taxicab driver in the industry respect the traffic laws around the U.S. Capitol. The security for the members of the House of Representatives and Senate of the United States is of optimum importance, as well as their staff, family and visitors. These members of Congress are part of a present national treasury. Don't let our illegal actions set up a terrorist scenario in which we all would suffer. Spread the word please!!!

One month has passed since the beginning of the illegal actions during the sting operation and the District Taxicab Commission has done absolutely nothing – which is normal when the taxicab industry is victim. The scenarios might have changed slightly over the past twenty years, but one factor remains constant in the District; taxicab drivers are always caught in the middle, which begs the question “Why?”

Support for the Taxicab Driver's Lawsuit By Aklile Redie

Again, I would like to thank all the taxicab drivers who have contributed financially for the lawsuit and those who keep current by paying their monthly dues. We want to thank this month two taxicab companies [Travelers: \$ 2,000 Sky: \$100] and also two drivers collected \$1,445 to help this organization. I would like to thank those two drivers for their inquiry and their willingness to help this organization by collecting money on the street. Thanks for all the efforts. This month, please continue to support D.C.P.T.D.A. by joining the organization if you have not already done so. It has come to our attention that some cab companies are collecting money under our organization name but they are not bringing anything to us. We understand this is not a good way of doing it. It is illegal and if we find out whom, it will be a problem for them.

It appears that some companies do not mind being cast in that light, but frankly, we don't like it. So please stop it unless you are ready to be taken to a court of law. I strongly urge you to consider and help this organization in our struggle. If you are concerned about the issues please help us. We are asking all of you to help this organization; we must start helping this organization to a new life before it is too late.

Reminder from editor

Although they quite often get mentioned together, membership and the legal fund are two separate entities. Please support both.

Dues and Donations

By William E. Lucas

D.C.P.T.D.A. has opened a merchant account. You can pay your monthly dues or contribute to the Defense Fund by using your check/debit card or your credit card. The account accepts Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover. The transaction will appear on your monthly statement. If you wish to use this service, call D.C.P.T.D.A. at (202) 832-3002 Monday through Saturday between 10:00AM – 5:00PM and ask to speak with William E. Lucas, or come to see Mr. Lucas at the office located at 2417 Evarts St. N.E. If Mr. Lucas is not available, leave your name, telephone number and the best time to call back on the voice mail.

Frankly Speaking

By Ted King

There seems to be an element of distrust of the D.C.P.T.D.A. by some taxi drivers. Why the reluctance? I personally do not understand. We are an organization formed solely to address the issues that affect the lives of every taxicab driver licensed by the District of Columbia. We have no other agenda. We have no other political motive than to fight for the rights of the industry. We are not trying to organize an association or cab company whereby we may keep monetary awards. What we intended and are still striving for is an organization in which every driver can and should feel proud to be a participant. We are of many different cultural backgrounds, yet we have at least two things in common, being human and driving a taxi.

I implore every driver to put aside racial and cultural differences and any manner of distrust. We have said from the beginning that we are a

house built of glass. You can see through and around us at all times and we invite you to do just that. This organization is built to last because our motive is clear and we value your trust. We, the Board of D.C.P.T.D.A. *thank all of you, both individual and corporate, who have supported this fight in any way.* We especially thank those of you who have joined and contributed regularly each month. We encourage you to become a dues paying member because at some point and time, you may have a personal need for assistance and as an organization, we can only provide for our membership.

We are presently in discussions with two insurance companies for life insurance for our membership at no additional cost.

Is It Clear Yet???????????????

By Hassan Abdur-Raheem

It's almost midnight and I have been working on this newsletter for a few hours. Most Yellow Cab radio drivers know that I am normally working during the evening on weekdays because I too like earn money as a cab driver. As I have compiled it from documents and notes submitted to me by the various authors, I have seen most of this information for the first time. I had no idea how much effort has been made to resolve the recent dilemma we faced on Capitol Hill concerning insurance. Most of you who are familiar with the D.C. Professional Taxicab Drivers Association, Inc. already know that it is **THIS** organization that has filed a lawsuit against the Government of the District of Columbia due to the ongoing non-resident inability to register his or her taxicab. This action will benefit every taxicab driver whether they are a member of D.C.P.T.D.A. or not a member. My contribution as the editor of this newsletter however is small by comparison to the ***TIME AND EFFORT*** that others are expending to try to unite us and fight for our rights.

Upon reading this newsletter, is it clear to you that while they must still fight the government over the H-Tag (registration) issue that they have immediately labored to fight for our rights concerning the insurance issue that recently caused many of us problems while trying to work on the Senate side of the Capitol? Is it clear to you that they too are taxicab drivers who need to have time to hack just like the rest of us? Is it clear to you that if you are not supporting this organization with your time and/or contributions

and/or moral support, that you are reaping benefits for which you have done nothing in the way of participation?

Just as a guess I would say that at least 85% of the taxicab drivers in DC are male. Yet, as dangerous as it can be driving a cab, especially at night, Carolyn Robinson (a female) is driving at night while she spends a good deal of time during the day fighting for the rights of so many males. I specifically say *male* because a *man* would not sit back and let a woman protect him while he does nothing. In every race, ethnicity, religion, culture, etc., etc., etc., the **men** are the **protectors of women**. Is it clear yet that we *males* need to stand up and be *men* when it comes to protecting our rights as taxicab drivers? Is it clear to you that while the government will not listen to you alone, or you or you... they WILL listen to US if we unite and stand before them together?

Open your eyes and see clearly that we as an industry are facing some serious problems, some of which just pop up out of nowhere like the ticketing and towing that happened recently. Don't be weak, help to fight back.

D.C.P.T.D.A. Database

The D.C.P.T.D.A. database is under construction. If you need additional information Contact William E. Lucas at (202) 832-3002 Monday through Saturday between 10:00AM – 5:00PM .E-mail—DCPTDA@Verizon.net

Did You Know?

Your manifest entries must be made in ink. In the present climate, you do not need to give them anything to bother you about.

Note: *There are other taxicab organizations, so be sure your funds are addressed to us.*

**Support DCPTDA by mail. Send Monthly Dues and/or Defense Fund check or money order to:
DCPTDA
P.O. Box 80006
Washington, DC 20018**

General Meeting

A general meeting of the D.C.P.T.D.A. has been scheduled for October. All members and perspective members are encouraged to attend.

Date: Saturday, October 14, 2006
Time: 2:00 – 5:00 PM
Location: Woodidge Public Library
18th & Rhode Island Avenue N.E.
Washington, DC 20018

If you are a non-resident of the District of Columbia Who has experienced not being able to register your vehicle, thereby not getting a “DCTC” and “H-Tag”, please fill out the form below, cut or tear it off and send or bring it to D.C.P.T.D.A.

D.C. Professional Taxicab Drivers Association, Inc.
2417 Evarts St. N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20018

Declaration

I, _____, am a licensed taxicab owner/operator who resides at _____ .
I have been a resident of Maryland/Virginia for _____ years. I am/am not a citizen of the United States of America.

On the _____ day of _____ 2006 I completed all necessary documents and attempted to register my taxicab in the District of Columbia. I was denied the privilege to register because I am not a District of Columbia resident. Specifically, I was not allowed to have a “DCTC” or to be issued an “H-Tag.”

I have not been able to use a “Pleasure Tag” or any non-commercial tag to operate my vehicle as a taxicab.

This is a true and accurate statement concerning ownership and operation of my taxicab.

Respectfully,

Taxicab Owner