

Good morning members of the transportation community and thank you for allowing me to testify today.

My name is Noe Castro. I was born and raised in Bridgeport Connecticut where I still live and I have been an Uber driver-partner since April 2014. My state senator is Edwin Gomes and my representative is Andre Baker. I am a first generation American. My family came to America from El Salvador. It has made me appreciate everything our country and state has to offer.

Before I joined Uber, I served in Air Force in active duty for 6 years including serving in Afghanistan during the war.

After my enlistment period ended, I joined the Connecticut National Guard, where I still serve today, and I went to the University of New Haven to get my Bachelor's degree.

I graduated in January 2014 and started looking for work. When I first hear about Uber and the opportunity it offered, I was skeptical. But after doing the research and trying it out, I was amazed.

While it was my primary source of income, I earned roughly \$900 a week. I love Uber because it is a game changer for driver-partners and for riders.

It allows me to be an entrepreneur and really run my own small business. My riders always tell me how much they enjoy Uber because they had such a difficult time getting reliable rides from taxis. I have heard stories of riders who either can't get picked up because of the neighborhood they are in or even get kicked out of taxis because the driver doesn't want to take them where they are going. With Uber, that discrimination doesn't happen.

But even more than the better experience for riders and economic opportunity for drivers, Uber is providing a much needed service to our communities in Connecticut. I now drive part time and work in the Connecticut State Department of Social Services as an eligibility worker, helping residents qualify for support services, such as food stamps.

This work is rewarding because I am serving my community. That's also how I feel when I drive on the Uber platform. I am giving the people of our State a service they really need and never had: the ability to get where they want, whenever they want no matter what community or neighborhood they are from.

My whole life has been about providing that type of service and giving back to my country and my community. Driving with Uber has empowered me to do that while earning a comfortable living.

Good morning members of the Transportation Committee, and thank you for giving me this opportunity to testify and share my testimony.

My name is Milagros Martinez, I live in New Haven Connecticut where I am raising my 17 year old daughter Milanni, who I am proud to say is an honor student. I have lived in Connecticut for over 12 years. My State Senator is Gary Winfield and my State Representative is Patricia Dillon.

I am an Uber driver-partner. I started driving with Uber in May, right when the company first came to Connecticut.

I have been amazed and impressed with how quickly Uber has become a vital part of the transportation network for riders in Connecticut. Driving has been easy, rewarding and helped me earn a real living.

I make between \$700 and \$800 a week and it makes me proud to drive with Uber because our riders truly appreciate the quality of service we provide.

I appreciate this even more because of where I worked before I started driving on the Uber platform. For several months last year, I did customer service for a company called Logistics Care.

Logistics Care is under contract to provide rides through cab companies in Connecticut, including Metro Taxi, to people who are on medicare or medicaid. These are people who are often elderly and sick and need regular transportation for medical care and doctor's appointments. Rides were often booked days in advance.

I worked for a part of Logistics Care called "Where's My Ride?" which is a customer care hotline for people to call into if their cab hasn't shown up. When I worked there, I would get roughly 100 calls a day, calls from sick people standing in the cold who had been waiting for hours for a taxi that simply never showed up. These people were frustrated, angry and even sometimes in tears. They didn't need a cab because they were going to see a friend or trying to get to work. They needed a cab to get them to a doctor's appointment or to get medical care. Not having a reliable ride meant missing appointments and not getting the care they needed.

Good morning and thank you for giving me this opportunity to testify.

My name is Michael Cacioppo, I was born in New Haven Connecticut and have spent almost my entire life in this state. I currently live in North Haven Connecticut and my State Senator is Leonard Fasano and my State Representative is James Albis.

I am a driver-partner with Uber, but I have spent the majority of my professional career as a taxi driver. I drove for Metro Taxi here in Connecticut on and off for 22 years.

Speaking from my over two decades of experience as cab driver, I want to urge this committee to pursue sensible regulations that help Uber continues to help drivers like me earn a better living.

The taxi system in Connecticut has been broken for years because there hasn't been any real competition. Both riders and drivers end up suffering the most under the taxi status quo.

I started driving a cab in 1992 because I was unemployed and I needed a good job. I am a people person so I enjoyed having an opportunity to talk with my riders, meet new people and drive around Connecticut.

The biggest obstacle I faced as a driver was not the work – but the entire taxi system that I had no choice but to participate in.

In order to drive an official metro taxi, I was required to pay between \$560 and \$750 a week. This meant that before I went out and did my job, I was already hundreds of dollars in the hole every single week.

I work hard, and I wanted to be able to earn a good living – but to make any real money while driving a taxi, my only option was to drive over 90 hours a week. That's over 12 hours a day, 7 days a week OR 18 hours a day 5 days a week. It's simply not sustainable, but I did it for over twenty years because, as a driver, I had no other choice.

There were also times when having to collect cash fares in a cab put me at risk. I was once robbed at gunpoint for my fares because the mugger knew I would have cash on me. The thief got away with \$50 of my earnings and I got away with my life. When the police caught him, they discovered he had been robbing cabbies in our area for weeks.

Today my life is much different. As a driver-partner with UberX I work on average 55 hours a week and bring in between \$800 and \$900 dollars a week. I drive my own car – no weekly taxi lease payments required – and I set my own schedule.

As a driver who has spent years on Connecticut roads, I recognize how much better Uber's system has been for riders, too. Trip pickups in minutes instead of hours, automatic payments