

Testimony of Sean LaChapelle

Manager, The Yellow Cab Company

Bloomfield, Connecticut

Transportation Committee

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Good morning, Chairpersons, Senator Leone, Representative Guerrero and members of the **Transportation Committee**, my name is **Sean LaChapelle**, I am the **General Manager of The Yellow Cab Company**.

I am here today to testify in regard to:

PHB 6349 An Act Concerning Ride-Sharing Companies and Drivers

The Yellow Cab Company is Connecticut's oldest taxicab company and holds the number "one" certificate dating back to 1898. It was Incorporated in 1921 and has been continually providing public transportation in the Hartford region for many years. The Yellow Cab Company has been a responsible taxpayer and continues to provide numerous jobs. The Yellow Cab Company currently employs more than 40 office workers and 150 part time and full time drivers. In the last three years, the Yellow Cab Company has invested more than 5 million dollars into its infrastructure. This includes "state of art" dispatching equipment, vehicle security cameras, rear seat payment devices and being an environmentally sensitive corporation has replaced 95% of its current fleet with clean burning natural gas vehicles thereby reducing pollution in Hartford and at Bradley International airport and other transportation centers. In August of 2014 we launched our mobile application that allows customers to request our taxi service via smartphone. With more than a 50% wheelchair accessible fleet, we are capable to serve the special needs of any passenger.

Recently So-called “ride share” companies (Uber, Lyft, Sidecar etc.) have entered the taxicab and livery business in Connecticut. Although they call themselves “ride sharing companies” they **are functioning as taxicabs** without being subject to any of the regulations, requirements or oversight that is designed to **protect the safety and security of the transported public**. Ride sharing is when two or more people ride in the same vehicle to work or ballgame and “chip in” or “share” expenses. What these APP driven companies are doing is not ‘ridesharing’ but simply **offering “for hire” transportation services for a fee, without governmental oversight and or regulation.**

These so-called rideshare companies utilize privately owned, unmarked vehicles which are not certified by the DOT or DMV, pay little or no taxes compared to taxicab and livery companies. Their vehicles do not receive safety inspections. Their drivers are not subject to continuous, medical and criminal background checks. They do not carry complete and extensive auto insurance coverage and their rates are not regulated by any current State of Connecticut Agency. In fact, they invoke unregulated “surge pricing” at will whereby the fare arbitrarily increases to the unsuspecting customer.

Over the years, the State of Connecticut has put in place a very elaborate set of regulations to **protect the safety** of the public that we transport in our taxicabs. Three State agencies oversee our operations (The Department of Transportation, The Department of Motor Vehicles and The Department of Consumer Protection. This oversight has been designed to assure that Connecticut’s consumers are safely transported. Very detailed rules and regulations have been put into place to protect passengers that seek the service that taxi cabs provide. Our vehicles, our drivers and fares are **strictly regulated** for a reason. Vehicle certification and inspection, mandated insurance requirements, driver background criminal and medical checks, clearly illuminated roof top dome lights, specific vehicle color and identification markings, inspected and sealed taxi meters are but a few of the

many protections which continue to be enforced to insure the safety and reliability of “for hire” transportation.

We are required to provide transportation on a 24hr/365day schedule. ALL Taxicab Companies must accept all requests (fares) for transportation.

For all of these reasons, we call upon this Committee to enact legislation requiring anyone offering public transportation for hire to be subject to **THE SAME RULES AND REQUIREMENTS** which are there **to protect passenger safety and security.**

Thank you