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Senate Bill No. 989: An Act Concerning Basic Labor Protections for Transportation Network Company Drivers

Dear Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Moses Dahn, and I live in New Haven with my wife and two children, ages 2 years and 4 weeks old. I am writing in support of Senate Bill No. 989: An Act Concerning Basic Labor Protections for Transportation Network Company Drivers.

I have been driving for Uber and Lyft for about 10 months. I started driving for them part-time when I was working for a biomedical engineering company because I needed to make extra money to cover the cost of babysitting. A lot of people do not understand this, but driving is not something that just anybody can do. You need to be a people person, you need to like meeting new people, and to be perceptive about whether they want to talk or sit in silence. I immediately loved driving because it was a good match for my strong people skills, and allowed me to set my own schedule. In fact, I enjoyed it so much that I transitioned to driving fulltime in December.

Flexibility was a major reason that I started driving, but recent decisions by Uber and Lyft have deprived me of the freedom to set my own schedule. Because these companies have brought on too many drivers, and because they allow drivers from out of state to pick up here, finding passengers has become a struggle. I often sit for a very long time waiting to find a customer, all the while making no money. I must now drive between 88 and 100 hours a week in order to make a living for me and my family.

Driving so many hours has been very difficult for me. Being away from my wife and young children is not easy. I am also worried that sitting for so long in one place will lead to back problems, and Uber and Lyft do not provide any health benefits. Additionally, I sometimes feel very fatigued and driving safely requires a good state of mind. I cannot just go back to what I was doing before, because I already had to buy a new car to qualify for Uber XL and premium rates. Even if I had the option to stop driving I would not want to, because it's the perfect job for me.

Senate Bill No. 989 would have a major impact on my life. We drivers know best how policy changes by transportation network companies impact us. We need legal protections so that we are not afraid to speak out about the negative effect of policies like hiring too many drivers. Also, the bill would allow me to drive fewer hours by limiting the proportion of each ride that transportation network companies can keep for themselves. For these reasons, I urge you to support Senate Bill No. 989.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Moses Dahn