

Teddy's Transportation System

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**SUPPORT HB 6349 – AN ACT CONCERNING RIDE-SHARING COMPANIES AND DRIVERS**

**CONTINUE THE REGULATION OF FOR-HIRE TRANSPORTATION COMPANIES AND OPPOSE ATTEMPTS TO DEREGULATE THE TAXICAB AND LIVERY INDUSTRY IN CONNECTICUT**

To Whom it May Concern:

Biography for Charles Wisniewski:

- gave my first talk on livery safety regulations, in Washington DC in 1985, to the second annual meeting of the National Limousine Association
- was elected to the NLA Board in 1990 and to the office of President in 1993.
- Elected to the office of President of Teddy's Transportation System in 1990, age 28
- Founding executive director, Limousine Operator of Connecticut; and, after 15 years, oversaw its merger with New England Livery Association (NELA)
- named NELA liaison to Connecticut Coalition for Safe Public Transportation (ConnSafe), 2014
- Guided Teddy's Transportation System to
  - LCT National Operator of the Year, 2012
  - LCT National Operator of the Year, finalist, 2011
  - Limo Digest National Operator of the Year, finalist 2007
  - University of Connecticut, School of Business, Family Business of the Year, finalist, 2007
  - Inc. magazine's 5,000 Fastest Growing Companies in America, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 & 2013

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- I. There are three ways lawmakers have traditionally chosen to keep the car-for-hire public service safe: Vigorously **inspect** drivers, cars, bases and management, regulate to **avoid falling safety margins** due to market over-saturation and, finally, regulate to **avoid older cars**.

Connecticut's lawmakers elected to use all three on various levels. *So did tens-of-thousands of elected officials in thousands of other jurisdictions across the globe.* Relevant Connecticut fees have always been inexpensive so we must conclude that safety concerns motivated

your predecessors; concerns likely triggered by injuries and/or deaths. Absent evidence to the contrary; and evidenced by vigorous current fights, by lawmakers across the globe to maintain safety standards, other jurisdictions seem to be facing the same need to avoid additional harms to their constituencies.

- II. The Uber model is catchy BUT NOT BECAUSE YOU CAN PUSH A BUTTON TO ORDER A CAR. You can do that anywhere; including Teddy's. It's catchy for two reasons: they, like apps and tech, in general, garner outrageously oversized capitalization<sup>i</sup>.

That and the fact that Google, the world's best marketer, started<sup>ii</sup> Uber, gives them the power to walk you and too many passengers slowly into a buzz saw<sup>iii</sup>.

The real "app" is this: Uber used that unique combination to push their *primary* business model: To push past lawmakers to put so many cars into the market that their users can get a ride in minutes. To have five drivers *sitting around* waiting for you to push a button simply *must* cause something to 'give' and clearly that has been the fares and the safety net.

For other examples of marketing triumphing over safety, think about sales of diet colas and cigarettes in the face of clear knowledge of aspartame and nicotine causing heart and other diseases. Heck Uber's continuous use of the misnomer 'shared ride' even got some here to suspend logic and believe that a driver can get paid to drive passengers without being labeled as an operator of a vehicle-for-hire.

"Sure," apps bandit oversaturation has and will force fares down. I'm all for lower prices too but the United States doesn't stop inspecting beef and farms to lower the cost of hamburger; just as Connecticut doesn't gut construction laws and enforcement to lower the cost of housing. I'm told that 28 U.S. states deregulated taxi and livery in the 1970's and, while nearly all rebuilt their safety nets, the desire to create a soft landing for the unauthorized drivers and operators caused *safety to be delayed by another fifteen years*.

It's been said that Connecticut DOT may have purposely gutted the taxi and livery division, likely to free up funds for 'more important' divisions. It is my understanding they want to push these safety tasks off on DMV, Consumer Protection or even back to the Public Utilities Commission. A 2012 follow up to a 2008 Connecticut study on vehicles-for-hire regulations found that ConnDOT failed to implement almost *all* of their recommendations. That is extraordinary job safety. Then instead of pulling the plates from app-bandit cars, when asked, they got you to order another study.

On insurance: Can you imagine getting pulled over by a Trooper, being asked for your valid license and registration and getting away with only a *promise* that they exist instead of showing proof? Meanwhile I have to get my fleet insurance policy verified and my registrations stamped at DMVs Insurance window. App bandit drivers or providers do not. (Well, they do, but we are not enforcing that rule.)

A recent visit by a ConnSafe member, to his Assemblyman, resulted in the Representative's intern lauding the merits of Uber ...but then reversing his opinion when he learned Connecticut was not

watching out for his safety. We assume government watches out for us when we ride the train or a plane; or buy a steak from the grocer. Please don't make us lose that sense of safety:

PLEASE CONSIDER THE PASSENGER INJURIES CAUSED and do not let Uber and Google continue to pull a fast one on you and vote to retain and enforce standing laws. The laws are clear - if you pick up and deliver a person in exchange for money you have to have a biometrics based background check, proof of valid for-hire insurance minimums, a special plate to let the passenger know he'll be safe and a permit to operate.

Thank you,

Charles Wisniewski  
President,  
Teddy's Transportation System  
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<sup>i</sup> [Outsized valuations](#) for tech companies are back with a vengeance. If you thought Facebook's \$1 billion acquisition of Instagram (which at the time had 16 employees) was an eyebrow-raiser, you might be shocked to hear that companies like Pinterest and Snapchat are now estimated to be worth four times as much.

<https://www.usv.com/post/527157ba4f87990002869371/are-the-worlds-chat-apps-really-worth-48-billion>

Fed has created abnormal market conditions by printing money and keeping interest rates low. Investors are looking for growth anywhere they can find it and tech companies are good targets - at these values, however, all tech stocks are expensive - even looking at 5+ years of revenue growth down the road.

Read more: <http://www.businessinsider.com/snapchat-ceo-on-tech-bubble-and-facebook-overvaluation-2014-12#ixzz3SIFGlaky>

<sup>ii</sup> Google Ventures Puts \$258M Into Uber, Its Largest Deal Ever

source <http://techcrunch.com/2013/08/22/google-ventures-puts-258m-into-uber-its-largest-deal-ever/>

<sup>iii</sup> Seemingly backwards, because Uber bullied its way into hundreds of markets knowingly without registering and following taxi and livery laws; but a Connecticut lawmaker recently suggested to news sources he'd have to consider bending safety laws because Uber is "already here." But I hope such logic would fall short if there was an app to facilitate other illegal endeavors - even ones with \$40 billion.