



Press Advisory

People with Disabilities and Advocates to Rally at Speaker Mark Viverito's Office

When: Thursday, June, 15th

Where: Speaker Mark-Viverito's district office at 105 East 116th St. New York, NY 10029

Time: 1PM

Groups concerned with accessible transportation and the failure of local political leadership will be holding a rally at City Council Speaker Mark-Viverito's district office featuring people with disabilities and advocates from a range of groups that promote the equitable treatment of disabled New Yorkers.

The purpose of this rally is to call attention to the fact that Mark-Viverito has actively been suppressing any legislation that would help to end the discrimination against people with disabilities by transportation network companies (TNCs) like Uber.

Edith Prentiss of Disability in Action is one of the organizers of the rally. As she points out:

"Speaker Mark-Viverito has actively suppressed legislation to end discrimination by Uber and other TNCs against people with disabilities. She has also blocked legislation to insure that Uber and its imitators provide accessible vehicles. In all, the Speaker has failed to hold Uber & other TNCs to the same accessibility regulations as other For Hire Vehicles."

Edith is Vice President for Legislative Affairs of Disabled in Action (DIA) of Metropolitan New York. She is also Chair of the Taxis for All Campaign and a leader of many other groups for the disabled in New York and in Washington Heights and Norwood communities. She is President of the 504 Democratic Club.

Jim Weisman, president and CEO of United Spinal also is outraged by the Speaker's obstructionism:

“It’s been over a year and a half since it was reported that the City Council was devising its own accessibility rules for these e-hail companies. In that period of time-ample time for legislation to be developed and introduced-the City Council has produced not a single bill or held a single hearing on the accessibility issue. Uber’s blatant discrimination has gone unchecked and the blame falls on the Speaker.”

Background

For the past two and a half years Mark Viverito, a self-described social justice warrior, has prevented any bill that would mandate that all TNCs become wheelchair accessible in the same way that NYC taxis are mandated.

By 2020, 50% of all taxis must be accessible but the unchecked and unfairly regulated TNCs have decimated the yellow cab industry-putting in peril the 2020 mandate. Driving a WAV is a greater challenge than a regular cab, and absent regulation, TNCs won’t provide the service.

In essence, Mark-Viverito, has undermined the most basic of NY values-the support for the underdog who needs the help of government in order to be able to achieve the same quality of life as other New Yorkers. That a NYC legislative leader would actively collude against people with disabilities is not only unbelievable, it is unconscionable.

On the other hand, the Speaker has been busy-preoccupied leading the fight against what she sees as the betrayal of NY values by the Trump administration. We remember when candidate Trump mocked a disabled reporter. But how is Mark-Viverito any better? We believe she is worse. The mocking of the reporter does not rise to the same level as the Speaker’s collusion with those actively discriminating against people with disabilities.

<http://thebronxchronicle.com/2017/06/11/opinion-speaker-melissa-mark-viverito-phony-defender-of-new-york-values/>

<http://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/sty-fling-council-mark-viverito-drafting-rules-article-1.2994843>

<http://www.crainsnewyork.com/article/20161215/OPINION/161209910/why-the-mta-should-give-uber-the-cold-shoulder>

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