



June 20, 2019

Executive Director Matt Wald's Statement to Press

Today, members of Drive Forward Seattle - a broad coalition including drivers from Uber, Lyft, Eastside for Hire, and other platforms - are gathered here at City Hall to send a message to elected officials that we are proud small business owners and want to maintain the freedom and flexibility to be our own bosses and make money on our own terms.

Councilmember Sawant's recent comments that our businesses are "basically sweatshops on wheels" are insulting and represent a fundamental misunderstanding of why we drive and how we earn money. Our businesses are not sweatshops. They provide opportunity... and that opportunity is different for everyone here today. To earn a living, supplement another source of income, save money for school, support a hobby or small business, be a stay-at-home parent, care for an elderly loved one... the reasons go on.

The City is now exploring new legislation that could take that opportunity away from us. What's worse, the City is pointing to inaccurate and misleading information from the Teamsters and the App-Based Drivers Association -- a group backed by the Teamsters -- as justification for why a new law is needed. The Teamsters have claimed that drivers make \$3 an hour. That couldn't be further from the truth. Many drivers make \$20-\$25 an hour-- even after expenses--and we have the earnings statements to prove it.

Additionally, the recent ABDA report on driver earnings is misleading for two main reasons: 1) it didn't factor in all forms of compensation, including tips, surge pricing, promotions or other incentives. And 2) the report is based on a few hundred trips from dozens of drivers last year. Given that there are 91,000 trips daily across the greater Seattle region, it's clear that these trips were cherry picked to fit a desired narrative. We call on ABDA to release the underlying trip data used for their report and the drivers that participated so the data can be audited and the conclusions verified.



Drivers here today support improvements to our industry - including portable benefits - and want to be engaged partners in those conversations. But we are here once again to fight vigorously for our rights as independent business owners and the freedom and flexibility offered to each and every one of us. As we've said before, we don't need the Teamsters or the City to come between us and how we earn money.