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TEAMSTER TAXI DRIVERS CALL ON D.C. MAYOR TO APOLOGIZE FOR OFFENSIVE COMMENT

Taxi Drivers View 'Third-World' Remark By Mayor's Spokesman As Demeaning, Callous

(WASHINGTON) – The Teamster-affiliated Washington, D.C. Taxi Operators Association released the following statement today regarding an offensive statement made to the media by Mayor Vincent Gray's spokesman:

“District taxi drivers are calling on Mayor Vincent Gray to publicly apologize for the [shameful and callous comment](#) made by his spokesman yesterday in an online Washingtonian article about a lawsuit filed by the Teamster-affiliated [Washington, D.C. Taxi Operators Association](#).

“Gray's spokesman insulted every driver in the city with his remark that 'we barely have a third-world taxicab system in this city.'

“[The statement is offensive and it demeans](#) the more than 6,000 taxicab drivers in the District, many of whom are from developing countries in Africa and the Middle East. Those words are hurtful to each and every driver who works long days—often up to 16 hours, seven days a week—and who earn about \$25,000 to \$30,000 per year providing a valuable service. The comments also demean an honorable profession that has a long, proud history in the District of being an economic lifeline for African Americans and the immigrant community struggling to provide for their families.

“Drivers have sought a meeting with the Mayor's Office about a moratorium on fines and towing because in many cases the credit card machines are not working properly, and the required dome lights were not available by the Nov. 1 deadline. As a result, the District has towed and impounded drivers' vehicles,

causing economic distress. Many drivers have been forced to stay at home, losing their income. Hundreds of drivers and their families are being harmed.

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“Rather than discuss what steps the District might take to help the drivers, or at the very least listen to their concerns, the Mayor’s Office attempts to slap them down.

“Drivers are outraged and shocked that a spokesman for the mayor of such a diverse city as Washington, D.C., would resort to insensitive and hurtful words.

“Drivers have long believed that their voices did not count to the Mayor’s Office, contributing to their frustration and anger. Those concerns have now been justified.

“The drivers, through their new association affiliated with Teamsters Local 922, filed suit Wednesday to stop the District from towing taxis and issuing fines to drivers who have been unable to install new dome lights or are saddled with unreliable credit card machines.”

Drivers will make their voices heard at the next meeting of the D.C. Taxicab Commission at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Nov. 13, at 441 4th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.

For more information, visit www.dctaxidrivers.com and www.teamster.org/dctaxi. Founded in 1903, [the International Brotherhood of Teamsters](http://www.teamster.org) represents 1.4 million hardworking men and women throughout the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. Follow us on Twitter @Teamsters and “Like” us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/teamsters.