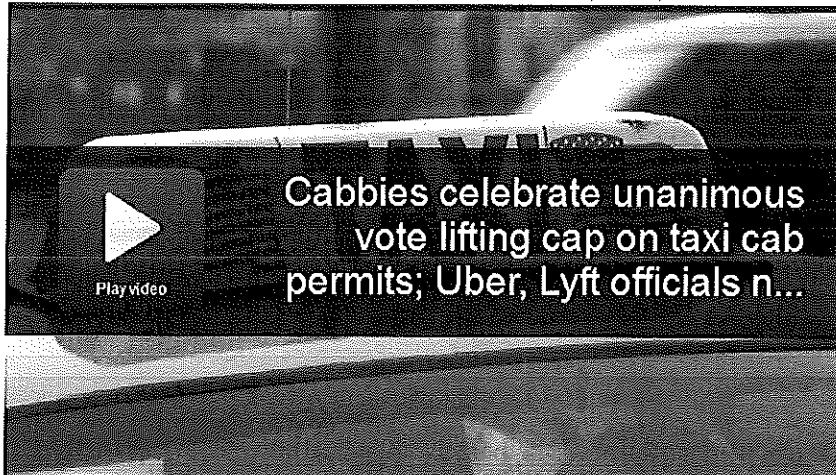


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Cabbies celebrate unanimous vote lifting cap on taxi cab permits; Uber, Lyft officials not pleased

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MILWAUKEE (WITI) — The Milwaukee Common Council voted unanimously on Tuesday, July 22nd to completely lift the cap on the number of taxi cabs that are allowed to operate in the city of Milwaukee. The vote was 15-0.

The new law requires taxis to comply with basic health and safety requirements such as inspections and minimum insurance coverage.

The law also offers a path for services such as Uber and Lyft to be recognized and licensed, increasing transportation options in Milwaukee.

Before Tuesday's vote, the city of Milwaukee only issued 420 taxi cab permits. Now, there's no such limit.

Uber and Lyft had been operating illegally, but now they're welcome — but with a set of requirements those companies aren't happy about.

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After every alderman voted on Tuesday, a crowd of cab drivers cheered the unanimous passage of the ordinance that allows Milwaukee to issue an unlimited amount of taxi cab permits.

"We are not just ordinary drivers. We're not just drivers. We've added another title to our title – that is CEO – Chief Executive Officer," taxi driver Idowu Ogultade said.

Cab drivers celebrated Tuesday's vote. They say it gives them the freedom to run their own taxi service — as opposed to relying on large cab companies, which held many of the precious permits.

Leaders of Uber and Lyft weren't so pleased with the vote.

"While the ordinance creates a general framework for a ride-sharing program in Milwaukee, it also creates a significant barrier to entry for would-be drivers," Uber Wisconsin General Manager Nick Anderson said.

Anderson says it's unreasonable to ask part-time Uber drivers to pay the same \$284 for a permit that full-time taxi cab drivers will. The ride-sharing companies also object to required background checks for drivers and mandatory vehicle inspections.

The Milwaukee Common Council says it has compromised by no longer demanding vehicles be inspected twice a year.

"While inspections are required, the timing of the inspection will be based on a selection process DPW institutes mainly to smooth out their workload," Alderman Bob Bauman said.

Cabbies say they've been liberated — but their newly-recognized peers believe the city didn't quite get this one right.

"We're definitely moving in the right direction, but when it comes to some of the barriers to entry, it's definitely gonna limit the potential upside," Anderson said.

The former taxi cab cap, implemented by the city of Milwaukee in 1991, caused the price of a taxi permit to rise from \$85 to over \$150,000 on the secondary market.

Under the law, the number of cab permits was fixed at about 320. However, the City of Milwaukee's Public Safety Committee voted unanimously on November 19th, 2013, to recommend an ordinance that would add 100 new taxi cabs to the city, raising the number of taxi cab

permits in the city to 420.

To get a permit, a driver must be licensed, must pass a background check, must have insurance, and must drive vehicles that pass safety requirements.

Drivers who don't have a permit would be subjected to fines.

For a first offense, the penalty would rise from a minimum of \$250 and maximum of \$500 to a minimum of \$1,500 and a maximum of \$ 2,500. The penalties for a second offense within 24 months would be increased from a minimum of \$500 and a maximum of \$750 to a minimum of \$2,500 and a maximum of \$4,000, and for a third offense within 24 months, the penalties would be increased from a minimum of \$750 and a maximum of \$1,000 to a minimum of \$3,000 and a maximum of \$5,000.

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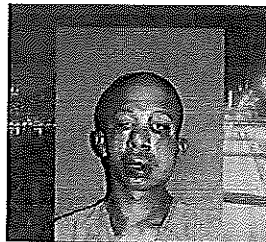
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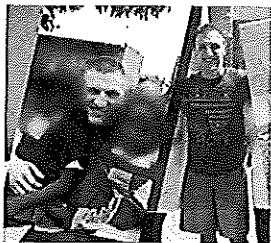
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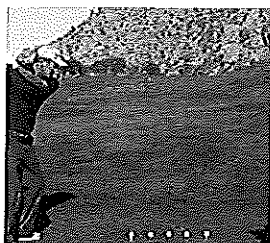
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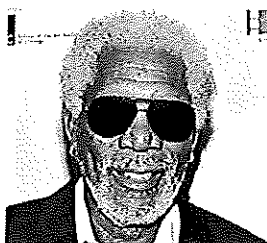
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