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City of Madison Regulation of Taxi Cabs

A major function of government is to bring equity to the market place and to ensure the health and safety of the public. When the City of Madison licensed Charter Communication's predecessor to provide cable TV, the regulatory function was exercised, requiring a plan to wire the entire city, not cherry pick the wealthiest and most convenient neighborhoods.

When the federal government authorized the creation of the Tennessee Valley Authority to provide electricity to the remote areas of Appalachia, the redistributive function of government was exercised with intent to serve communities that were of little interest to the private sector.

Throughout this nation's history, regulatory agencies of state governments, usually public service commissions, ensured that telephone service was available to all residents and that companies that served the disadvantaged were not put in an unfair competitive position.

Cities like Madison, New York, Chicago, and Minneapolis have regulatory standards for taxi cab companies designed to protect the public, and those companies committed to equitable service.

The purpose of the regulations are multiple.

- To ensure public accommodations – that every individual and every neighborhood is served.
- To ensure a full complement of service – that cab service is available every day of the week, every hour.
- To ensure that every passenger confidently knows that the driver and the vehicle are adequately ensured.
- To ensure that every driver is vetted and that a responsible locally licensed business that can identify and vouch for that driver.

Uber and Lyft refuse to meet these standards, and to date, refuse to respect Madison ordinances, choosing to muscle their way into the Madison market rather than meeting with the established commissions to discuss their disagreements with our regulatory framework.

The Wisconsin State Journal assertion "*Advocates for more competition say it hasn't been hard to find a ride late at night in cities that have encouraged Uber and Lyft.*" is false. As anyone who hails a cab in Washington D.C., a city with an extensive Uber presence, knows it is very difficult to find a cab at night particularly when there is inclement weather. On the night of January 21, 2014, those waiting for taxi service, both Uber and conventional, at National Airport, stood in the cold and snow for over two hours. In 2008, the Wisconsin legislature deregulated companies that provide cable and internet services to our

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residents. As a result, the *digital divide* continues to grow and low income households with children, the overwhelming majority of which are African-American, Asian, and Latino, cannot access the internet.

Finally, these companies have no ability to provide equal transportation to people with disabilities, which is inconsistent with our ADA and EO ordinance. With limited access to taxi transportation, this further disenfranchises the disability community.

There is a lot of talk about achieving racial and social equity. This issue will test that commitment with a real life example of reasonable and responsible government regulation as opposed to deregulation in the name of free enterprise that leaves vulnerable communities with reduced levels of service.