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From: Harris Gelbard <harris_gelbard@urmc.rochester.edu>
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2015 8:08 PM
To: IRRC; dweldon@philapark.org; jney@philapark.org
Subject: Philadelphia Parking Authority's Proposed Rulemaking Order 126-11

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2015 JUN 30 AM 9:23

I support the Philadelphia Parking Authority's Proposed Rulemaking Order 126-11, which would require all vehicles proposed for taxicab service after a designated date to be wheelchair accessible. I believe that a fully accessible taxicab system is a vital component of any world-class city and reflects how a city respects the civil rights of its citizens and visitors. It is important that this rulemaking passes so that the City of Brotherly Love becomes the first city in America with a fully integrated taxicab system.

As the father of a daughter with cerebral palsy, I am very aware that it is more difficult for her to get around Philadelphia. What's been really troubling to her (and us as her parents) while living in Philadelphia is that there is a great lack of accessibility, there, of acceptance. Buses, though accessible, have sometimes refused to allow enough time for her to be safely seated, or to safely exit. Trolleys are entirely inaccessible to her. And though there are more than 100,000 people living with disabilities in Philadelphia, there are only 7 accessible taxicabs to serve them all. She has known many friends who have had to wait for long stretches in the cold, in the rain, in the dark, only able to move as far as they can wheel themselves.

As someone who has to live with disability every day, her words are far more powerful than mine. I continue to quote them here: "Many envision disability as an unfortunate departure from a norm, as something for which individuals must shoulder burden in relative isolation. There is another way of looking at things, though. Let's talk about disability not as a medical problem but as a social one. There is nothing-- nothing-- inherently wrong with differently abled individuals. There is something wrong with society at large, with any society built to be accessible only for some."

I hope you can listen to her words too.

However we move through the world, we should all be afforded the tools to do it equally. This is a social justice issue. And so I support the Philadelphia Parking Authority's Proposed Rulemaking Order 126-11, which would

require all taxicabs to be wheelchair accessible. I thank you, too, for your consideration, for your action, so that our city (and our world) might be made more accessible, and accepting, too.

Thank you,

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