



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Marisol Alcántara

## Senator Marisol Alcántara Passes Taxi Driver Protection Act, Rallies with Senator Ruben Diaz Sr., Assemblyman Ron Kim, Victims of Hate Crimes, Association of Livery Base Owners, The Taxi Worker Alliance, and the New York Immigration Coalition

MARISOL ALCANTARA June 9, 2017

| ISSUE: **DISCRIMINATION, WORKERS' RIGHTS, TRANSPORTATION**

**Albany, NY - Senator Marisol Alcántara (D-Manhattan)**, together with **Senator Reverend Ruben Diaz Sr.**, victims of passenger crime, the **New York Immigration Coalition**, the **Taxi Workers Alliance**, and the **Association of Livery Base Owners**, celebrated the passage of a bill protecting drivers from hate crimes and on-the-job attacks this Friday afternoon at the dispatcher of the Audubon Car and Limousine Service, 2129 Amsterdam Avenue, in Washington Heights.

On April 17th, 2017, The New York Daily News reported that Harkirat Singh, a Sikh immigrant from India, was assaulted by an intoxicated passenger, in an altercation that led to the passenger punching him and stealing his turban, which is the primary symbol of his faith.

The bill, S.5690B, sponsored by **Senator Marisol Alcántara**, would protect for-hire drivers, including taxi drivers, from being assaulted on the job by creating a violent Class D felony, punishable by up to seven years imprisonment for assaulting a for-hire driver. Postings in taxis would alert passengers of the new protections for drivers.

**State Senator Marisol Alcántara** said: "Taxi and livery drivers are very vulnerable to attacks or crime from their passengers, and in New York State, many of those drivers are Muslim or Sikh. Considering the uptick in bias crimes in New York after the 2016 election and the high overall risk of harassment or assault drivers face on the job, I thought it was important that both passengers and drivers knew that assaulting a driver would have serious consequences, not just a slap on the wrist. I urge the Assembly to pass this important piece of legislation."

**State Senator Reverend Rubén Díaz** said: "I am proud to stand beside Senator Marisol Alcántara to announce this important piece of legislation. Our taxi and livery cab drivers are too often criminal targets, and it is our expectation that when this bill is signed into law, it will not only further punish the guilty, but also, deter crime."

**Assemblyman Ron Kim**, the Assembly sponsor of the bill, said: "For-hire drivers have one of the most dangerous jobs in our state. Too many drivers are being assaulted by passengers, and often times they are being targeted because they are immigrants or minorities. After the most recent spate of attacks, I knew something had to be done and worked with my colleagues to introduce the Taxi Driver Protection Act. I thank Senator Alcántara for her leadership in the Senate; we remain confident that we will be able to work with Speaker Heastie and Chairman Lentol to pass this bill in the Assembly and secure increased protections for drivers." - Assemblyman Ron Kim

**Bhairavi Desai, Executive Director of the New York Taxi Workers Alliance**, said: "Taxi and livery drivers remain at higher risk of assault, robbery and homicide on the job than other workers. No worker or their loved ones should have to fear that going to work to earn a living could put them at risk of injury or even death. Thanks to the Senate's leadership, a workforce of over 100,000 drivers across the state across our state can feel some security that the law will

prioritize their safety. We urge the Assembly to follow suit and protect a largely immigrant, Muslim, and Sikh workforce especially in these times of increased hate crimes.”

"The New York Immigration Coalition applauds Senator Alcántara for recognizing the unique vulnerability of immigrant drivers, and taking steps to protect them," said **Murad Awawdeh, Director of Political Engagement at the New York Immigration Coalition**. "There's been a verified uptick in bias crimes since the election, and drivers are on the front-lines. Hate has no place in our New York"

"I thank Senator Marisol Alcántara for her efforts in passing this bill in the Senate. I vividly remember when I was driving a customer home when he started cursing at me and yelling obscenities. I felt as if my life was in danger. This bill is a call to all perpetrators informing them that our state legislature is taking action to ensure that their actions are not permitted, and if committed, they will be properly prosecuted," said **Mr. Kahn, victim of assault** while on duty as a taxi driver.

###

---

#### RELATED LEGISLATION

---

### **2017-S5690B**

- 
- Introduced

- ○ In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
  
- ○ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
  
- ○ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
  
- Delivered to Governor
  
- Signed By Governor
  
- 

Includes within the class D felony of assault in the second degree, the assault of a driver of a for-hire vehicle or transportation network company driver

April 26, 2017

In Senate Committee [Codes](#)

Sponsored by [Marisol Alcantara](#)

Do you support this bill?