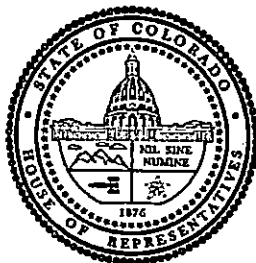


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Capitol: 303-866-3068
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HB 15-1316

Information Packet


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Lawmakers have right idea on taxis

Among the highlights of Colorado's 2014 legislative session were spirited debates over how to regulate transportation newcomers UberX and Lyft. To their credit, lawmakers eventually passed a bill allowing the newcomers into the market despite a massive lobbying campaign by the taxi industry.

But transportation regulation in Colorado remains needlessly burdensome and bureaucratic, and an unusual coalition of Democrats and Republicans in the legislature have banded together to do something about it.

They're sponsoring House Bill 1316, which would simplify the process by which a new company could supply service in eight Front Range counties, including metro Denver.

Currently, the Public Utilities Commission requires an applicant to demonstrate a public need for the new service. That claim can then be challenged by opponents and the application denied by the PUC if it believes the rebuttal was effective.

Throughout most of the economy, of course, upstart suppliers do not have to make any such demon-

stration of public demand, and it makes little sense for them to have to do so in transportation, either.

Consumers are the ultimate regulators of supply through the choices they make.

To that end, HB 1316 explicitly states that an "applicant need not prove the inadequacy of existing taxicab service, if any, within the applicant's proposed geographic area of operation."

In addition, if the PUC determines that the applicant "has proved its operational and financial fitness, the commission shall grant the applicant a certificate."

Rep. Steve Lebsock, D-Thornton, who is a key sponsor of the legislation, told us that new taxi firms shouldn't need a "by your leave" from government in order to compete in the market. He values the PUC's role in protecting public safety, he emphasized, but sees no reason why normal market forces should be suppressed in deciding whether demand exists for additional service.

The legislature made giant steps last year toward upgrading this state's transportation regulation. Lebsock's bill helps further that process.

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By José Anton
Meade Kuribe
Guest Comment

Lessons from a reporting fiasco

A report by the Columbia University Graduate School of Business was looking for "a single, emblematic college rape case" and

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Page Two

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House Bill 1316 brings competition and opportunity to Colorado's taxi industry

By Abdi Buni

My name is Abdi Buni and I am an immigrant from Ethiopia. I have been a cab driver here in Denver for years – my family and I love Colorado, my eldest son currently attends Denver University.

Myself and many other drivers I work with only want one thing; the dream we came to this country for: to have our own company.

Last year the State of Colorado opened the door to taxicab competition through ride-sharing companies like Uber & Lyft. The public has greatly benefited.

Less well known are two other great success stories, Mile High Cab & Union Cab. These companies were founded by hard working, lawful immigrants who wanted to pursue the American dream. Of course, the big cab companies cried foul and predicted disaster. And, of course they were wrong.

Companies like Yellow & Metro Cab fought tooth and nail to keep these companies out to protect themselves from competition. But instead, the result has been a better, more affordable and reliable taxicab transportation.

Now, a bi-partisan coalition of legislators from the liberal, to the conservative, to the libertarian has joined to again bring more even more competition and deregulation to the cab market though House Bill 1316. The bill even has organized labor and economic conservatives pushing for it together, illustrating that a good idea every now and again will attract people of goodwill from across the political spectrum.

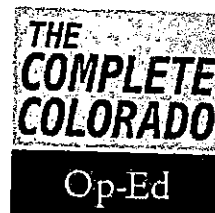
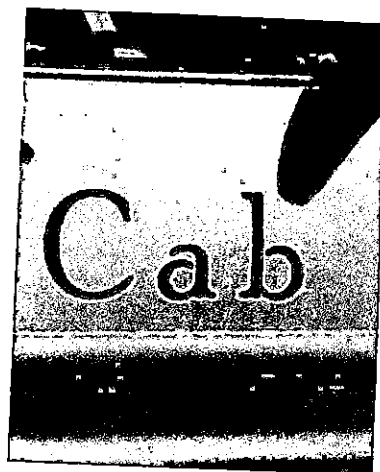
Right now, in order to start a new cab company you have to prove public need to the Public Utilities Commission. This bill simply removes the public need aspect, and allows you to start driving your taxi if you are operational and financially fit, and meet all of the other safety/legal requirements.

The only opposition we face, yet again, are the big cab companies. They have hired hordes of lobbyists and passed out thousands of dollars in campaign cash. But, since these companies have the most to lose at the start up of new cab companies, their actions are preventing others from being able to realize the same American dream they fought for.

Let's not kid ourselves. All the claims now made by the big cab companies are the same claims that were proven wrong in the past – they only want to stop competition and are willing to spend thousands of dollars to protect their share of the market through government-sponsored protectionism.

Is anyone really satisfied with the service the big cab companies provide? And, the way they treat their drivers leaves a lot to be desired. In 2012, one company had to spend millions after having been found guilty of repeatedly subjecting their drivers to the most racist and vile treatment and language. I want to start my own company and treat my employees better.

Some new cab companies will succeed, while others will fail. We are confident we will succeed and are only asking for the opportunity to try. And at the end of the day we all know who will benefit from increased taxicab competition – the public, people



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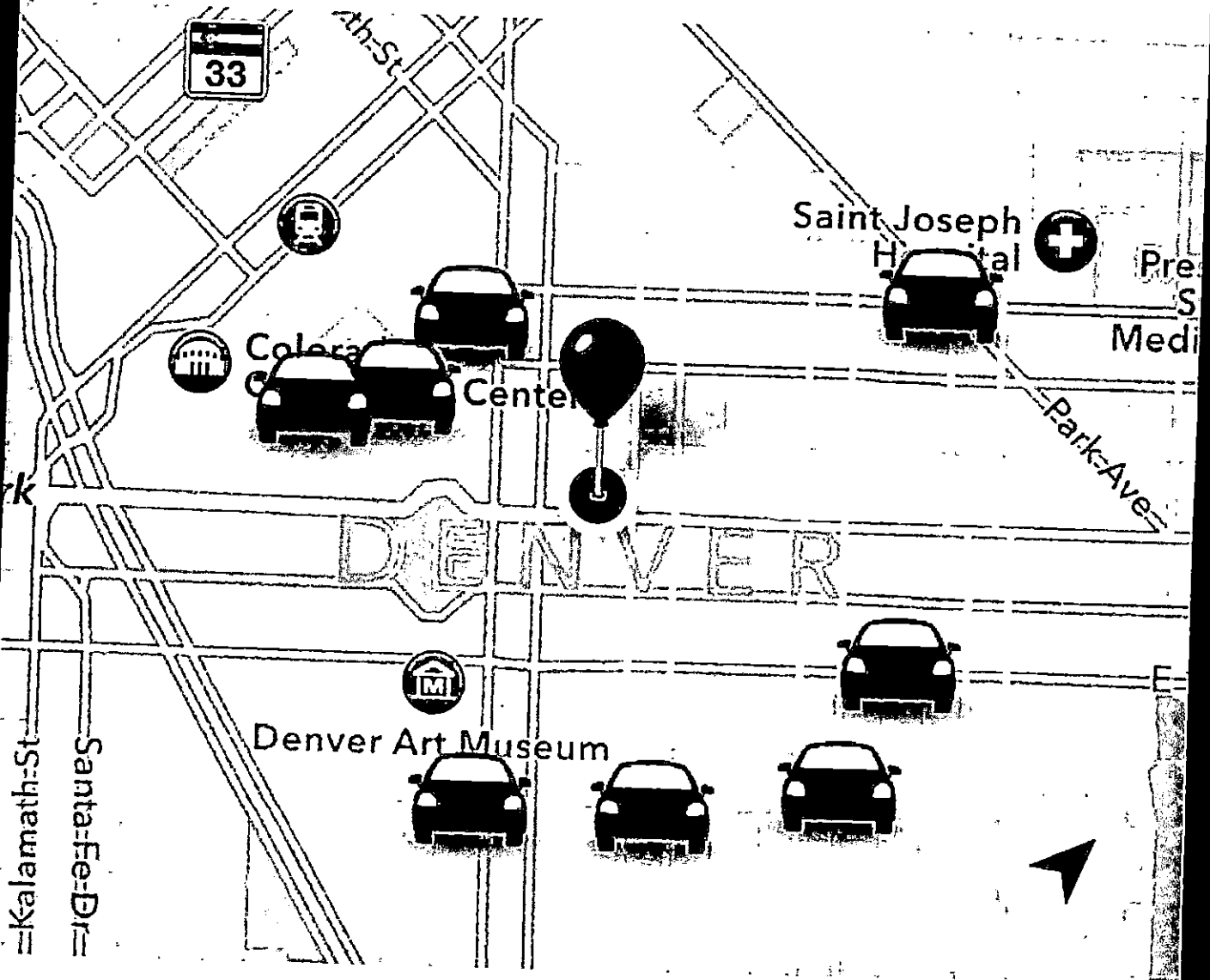
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