



# Medallion Debt Relief Call Script

## Background

Yellow cab owner-drivers in New York are suffering under a lifetime of unpayable debt as a direct result of city policy. For years, the city auctioned off taxi medallions at outrageous prices it knew were inflated well above their true value. Thousands of people - almost all of them working-class immigrants - were conned into taking out huge loans to cover the cost, believing the city when it told them that the medallion was their ticket to the American dream.

Then the medallion market crashed, as the city knew it would. Today, the average owner-driver owes \$550,000 to predatory banks and hedge funds, while the value of a medallion is just over \$100,000. Monthly payments can be well over \$2,000. If a driver can't pay, the lender can seize their home and garnish their bank account to satisfy the outstanding debt. Facing that possibility, several drivers have committed suicide in recent years out of desperation.

Now the mayor's office has announced a phony "relief program" that is nothing more than a banker bailout. It's going to give \$65 million directly to the banks and hedge funds that own medallion debt in exchange for a negligible reduction in the principal owed on them. **But for thousands of owner-drivers, monthly payments will still be as high as \$2,000/month. That means that after payment, the average wage drivers earn will be less than \$8/hour.**

**This deal is a debt trap. Call the mayor and tell him that we don't need more banker bailouts. We need real relief for drivers.**

**Number: 212-788-2162**

**Script:** *Hello, my name is [YOUR NAME], I'm a New Yorker living in [YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD], and I'm calling to ask Mayor De Blasio to provide real relief for struggling yellow cab owner-drivers, not bail out the bankers who are profiting from their pain.*

*The plan announced by the mayor's office allows banks to charge as much as \$2,000/month for medallion mortgages, which is well beyond what almost all drivers can afford. The city is giving away millions in taxpayer money to these banks, but the drivers are getting nothing in return.*

*I'm urging the mayor to listen to the drivers' demands for a city-backed guarantee on outstanding medallion debt for all owner-drivers, which will incentivize lenders to reduce the principal of the mortgages to no more than \$145,000, payable at \$800/month. That is a liveable plan, and anything that provides drivers with less relief is unacceptable. This city created this crisis, and we have a responsibility to solve it.*