

Mayor Filner Victory!

Drivers Celebrate Intense Campaign

By Sarah Saez

who make San Diego great.

What an exciting year! The San Diego 2012 mayoral race mattered to taxi driver leaders and advocates because Carl DeMaio, one of the candidates, was one of only three San Diego City Council members who voted against taxi drivers having an equal voice on the city's Taxi Advisory Committee (TAC). We didn't want our hard "equal representation" work of 2011 undone, and immediately knew that we couldn't afford to have someone in office who didn't respect the hard working people

But it wasn't until we were able to sit down with Mayoral candidate Bob Filner that we knew he was the candidate we needed to stand behind. Not only do we believe that Bob Filner can help improve the taxi industry but we also believe he can help improve the lives of many of our drivers and their families who live in the low income neighborhood of

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As another year comes to an end, United Taxi Workers of San Diego would like to extend the very best wishes to you for a happy holiday season. We had another great year! By pushing Ordinance 11 reform, the regulatory ordinance of the taxi industry, we secured increased transparency and protection for taxi drivers. We were able to extend protection for drivers by from exploitive tax fraud. Permit holders are now required to keep record of



UTWSD provided hundreds of volunteer hours on the Filner campaign

City Heights. What we liked most about Bob Filner was his continued commitment to helping marginalized people, from his days as a young Freedom Rider in the south, to empowering a largely immigrant work force by his promise to give everyone a seat at the table if elected!

and the San Diego Labor Council. We registered community members all around San Diego, in East African restaurants, as well as house to house, and places of worships.

Our UTWSD Voter Registration Team consisted of 9 drivers, all members of the East African community in City Heights. Along with three UTWSD staff, the team started working from the month of May until June 5th for the primary elections and continued the month of September until November 6th, the day of elections. Our outreach included phone banking and walking precincts with our friends at the San Diego Organizing Project

For our volunteer phone banking during day and night shifts, at the UTWSD and at the San Diego Labor Council, we were able to engage the East African community members who only spoke Somali or Ethiopian dialects. And on the day of the elections the team was able to organize themselves to be at different areas in the city, calling the people



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the thousands of dollars they receive from drivers so that they will available upon request for drivers to properly file their taxes.

Additionally, after our pressuring dozens of downtown hotels and MTS about **illegal competition**, Ordinance 11 now allows increased enforcement by MTS to write violations for charter vehicles, buses, and TCP's.

But we didn't stop there. We made **health and safety** a priority in 2012 by lobbying for cameras in all taxicabs, which we're hoping will go into effect in the new year. And we hosted two summer OHIP Interns who conducted a crucial driver health and safety survey.

At the **Airport** level, we also had many accomplishments. We stopped front of the line privileges after drivers bravely stood up, and ended additional \$0.38 surcharges.

2012 was also historic as we were welcomed as the first non-union workers to be **affiliated** with the **San Diego and Imperial County Labor Council**. A big "Thank You" to CEO Lorena Gonzalez!

And then there were the **mayoral elections!** UTWSD ended the election cycle in style! In total we knocked on over 5149 doors, registered more than 242 new voters, made hundreds of calls while phone banking, and gave rides to polling places. **And most importantly WE WON!**

Overall we achieved more than we sought out to do! I want to thank our team, our active members, Board of Directors, volunteers, friends, allies, brothers and sisters. Lastly, I want to give a personal thank you all the hard working San Diego taxi drivers, the Employee Rights Center and the San Diego Labor Council. Without all of you we could not have done this! **Here's to an even more successful 2013! And remember,**

We are not alone. We have rights!

-Mikail Hussein, President

Health Survey Exposes Driver Concerns

By Sarah Saez

This past summer we were fortunate to partner with the Employee Rights Center and the Association of Occupational and Environmental Clinics through their Occupational Health Internship Program (OHIP). OHIP is a summer program where college and graduate school students survey vulnerable populations of workers to document their health and safety issues on the job. Previous taxi surveys had been conducted in both New York and Los Angeles. This was the first study of its

kind conducted on taxi drivers here in San Diego. OHIP interns Mina Nguyen and Roxana Said designed a well-rounded workplace health and safety survey and reached out to the most concentrated taxi stands in downtown, the Fashion Valley Mall, Mission Bay, Old Town, Pacific Beach, and the San Diego Airport Holding Lot.

50 drivers participated in the survey and more than 100 drivers received first aid kits as well as other helpful health and safety information from Mina and Roxana. We want to thank everyone who made

this study possible including OHIP interns Mina and Roxana, the Employee Rights Center, the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, the Association of Occupational and Environmental Clinics, the California Wellness Foundation and all the drivers who participated! Let's continue working together to make a difference in the lives of taxi drivers!

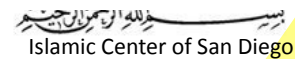
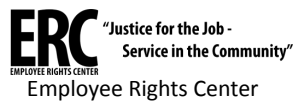
For the full report please visit our **Industry Resources** page under **Taxi Studies**: <http://utwdsd.org/industry-resources/>

KEY FINDINGS

- ✓ 74% of drivers have NO health insurance.
- ✓ A majority of drivers reported working 7 days a week for 12 hours per shift with no days off.
- ✓ 50% of drivers reported not taking any kind of break.
- ✓ The meal skipped most by drivers was Breakfast, followed by lunch.
- ✓ Many drivers avoid drinking water throughout the day so they only have to use the restroom on average 1 to 2 times per shift.
- ✓ 68% of drivers suffer from lower back pain due to their occupation.
- ✓ 70% of drivers report having been verbally assaulted while on the job.
- ✓ Most physical assaults occurred at night.
- ✓ 67% of drivers reported being assaulted by an intoxicated passenger.
- ✓ 81% of drivers would like cameras installed in their taxicabs, 67% would also like partitions.

2012 THANK YOU

UTWSD would like to thank our partners and supports for the year. Special gratitude goes to the following organizations:



We would like to thank the following **elected officials** for their leadership:

Councilmember Marti Emerald

Councilmember Steve Castaneda

Councilmember Tony Young

Councilmember Todd Gloria

Councilmember David Alvarez

Councilmember Sherri Lightener

El Cajon Councilmember Bob McClellan

Poway City Councilmember Jim Cunningham

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on their list and giving rides to the polling places.

This entire effort would have not been possible without the collaboration of SDOP, the San Diego Labor Council, and the Employee Rights Center,



Mikail and Labor Council CEO Lorena Gonzalez.

including the invaluable training we were able to receive from them. We learned so much from this experience that we did not know before. We learned technical skills like how to read a walk list as well as new ways to connect with our community to become more civically engaged. It was truly a fascinating process for us!

Finally like all of our UTWSD campaigns, we finished this election cycle in style!

In summary, we're very proud to announce that after 33 days and over 1200 hours our team knocked on over 5149 doors, registered over 242 new voters, educated our community on important issues, did hundreds of hours phone banking, and happily gave rides to the polls election day!

Thank you again to UTWSD Team and our member volunteers, and to the San Diego Labor Council, especially Lorena Gonzalez for her leadership and our friends at SDOP and the ERC for all your guidance!



Filner campaign volunteers.



New LOWER DUES for 2013!!! You Spoke and We Listened

UTWSD is happy to announce that we've LOWERED our monthly membership dues to **\$10 a month.**

Also we've created a membership category for *volunteer members* who can join for free and serve at least two hours a month to volunteer at the office or in UTWSD outreach to other drivers.

Don't forget, you can now pay your UTWSD Membership Dues online at:

<http://utwds.org/membership/join-now>

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Sarah Saez, Lead Organizer

Sarah has worked as an avid advocate and community organizer for the United Taxi Drivers of San Diego for the past two years. With more than eight years of organizing experience, Sarah applies her passion and skill to improve working conditions for taxi drivers through direct advocacy, empowerment, and increasing education and civic participation by drivers and their families.

A graduate from Barry University with a degree in Sociology and Criminology, Sarah is currently working on her Master's degree in nonprofit leadership at the University of San Diego School of Leadership and Education Sciences. Sarah has applied the humanistic and scientific perspectives of her graduate study to her UTWSD work, and has raised awareness that taxi drivers earn below poverty wages of \$4.23 per hour, has led a campaign against over-ticketing, and has promoted Ordinance 11 reform. Her focus on anti-retaliation protection, increased restroom mobility, increased taxi vehicle safety, and healthy drivers are at the core of UTWSD's work.

Her unrelenting determination and sincere belief in the

fundamental rights of the working poor, have propelled Sarah into a key leadership position for San Diego taxi drivers. Sarah has been a steadfast proponent for advancing the proposals that drivers merit equal representation on San Diego's Taxi Advisory Committee and has lobbied city council and board members to approve a recommendation to ensure democratic elections on San Diego's Taxi Advisory Committee.

Sarah has also created and maintained partnerships with an active network of local nonprofit supporters, including Realize Marketing which designs and maintains the UTWSD website. Sarah continues to reach out to the community on behalf of the United Taxi Workers to strengthen ties with important allies.

UTWSD could not have reached its major initiatives in the past year without Sarah's expertise and dedication and we have been fortunate to benefit from Sarah's knowledge, positive attitude, and zealous advocacy for workers' rights! As Mikail always says, "Sarah is everything for us."

Upcoming Events

UTWSD

7364 El Cajon Blvd. Ste 108
San Diego, CA 92115

Membership Meetings

5348 University Ave. Ste 110
Jan 28 – 3:00-4:30p.

Information Session

UTWSD office

Jan 22 – 3:00-5:00p.
Feb 19 – 3:00-5:00p.
Mar 19 – 3:00-5:00p.

Airport Meetings

Commuter Terminal 3rd Floor
3225 North Harbor Drive
San Diego, CA 92101

- Thursday, Jan 10, 9am (Spcl Board/ALUC)
- Thursday, Feb 14, 9am (Spcl Board/ALUC)
- Thursday, Mar 7, 9am (Board)

Public Safety & Neighborhood Service

202 C Street
San Diego, CA 92187

- Wednesday, Jan 16, 2pm

Taxicab Advisory Committee

1255 Imperial Ave, 10th Floor
San Diego, CA 92101

Meeting Dates for 2012:

- No scheduled meeting until March. Visit UTWSD website for updates.

Metropolitan Transit System

1255 Imperial Ave, 10th Floor
Suite 1000
San Diego, CA 92101

Board Meeting Dates

- Thursday, Jan 17, 9am
- Thursday, Feb 21, 9am
- Thursday, Mar 21, 9am



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<http://www.utwdsd.org>

Mission:

The mission of UTWSD is to unify taxicab workers, to improve working conditions through direct advocacy and empowerment, to increase education and civic participation by taxi drivers and their families, and to improve professional transportation services for San Diego communities and visitors.

Vision:

We envision a driver-led taxi industry that provides exceptional, efficient, and safe service for residents and visitors, and that meets the comprehensive and diverse needs of taxi drivers and their families. We envision a professional working environment free from humiliation, intimidation, discrimination, and exploitation. We envision UTWSD providing strong and representative leadership in this healthy, productive, and inclusive taxi industry.