



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Martin Malavé Dilan

Legislation Sponsored By Senator Dilan Prohibits Unauthorized Solicitation of Passengers at Airports

MARTIN MALAVÉ DILAN September 11, 2009

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(Albany, NY)—Senate bill S.5643, sponsored by Senator Martin Malavé Dilan (D-Brooklyn), passed in the upper house making it a class B misdemeanor for ground transportation services to solicit passengers outside airports.

“Illegal hustling continues to be a problem at New York airports. Once law, this measure will protect visitors to New York that are unfamiliar with ground transportation options,” said Senator Dilan, Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee. “Countless visitors have been the victims of unscrupulous and illegal practices by these services. It is time this practice came to an end.”

Although current law prohibits the practice, punishment of initial offenses has been met with relatively small fines which are easily accepted as a cost of doing business. In the absence of an effective penalty, the prohibited practice flourishes.

S.5643 would make it a crime for any driver, for a price and without authorization or prearrangement, to offer ground transportation at an airport. The legislation would increase the penalty for unlawful solicitation of ground transportation services at airports to a class B

misdemeanor for the first offense; punishable by a fine of no less than \$500 and not to exceed \$1,250 or by imprisonment of no more than 90 days or both.

“This predatory practice has seen visitors unfamiliar with U.S. currency standards bilked for relatively short rides. In areas where tourism plays a major role in the economy, this has become a black mark” said senator Dilan. “It is time that we make the best of our airports and keep them the safe and welcoming environments they were intended to be.”

The bill has passed both houses and awaits the Governor’s approval at which time it will take effect immediately.