

13-1752

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July 3, 2013

Dear Councilman Buscaino:

By now I'm sure you've had a chance to read the report issued by the LAPD regarding the terrible hit and run problem faced by the city of Los Angeles. This issue has special meaning to me as my son wasn't killed by the hit but by the run of Roberto Galo in San Francisco in 2010. In fact, I believe that it was my publishing of the Los Angeles Hit and Run numbers for 2010 that became the premise for the LA Weekly article that brought this travesty to light.

Like so much of what I have seen all over this state when it comes to the issue of unlicensed drivers and now hit and run drivers is not only an attempt to obfuscate the truth but as with this report to actually blame the LA Weekly for writing the story. Chief Beck and the Los Angeles Police Commission refuse to face the real issues when it comes to public safety and many drivers in Los Angeles.

The motion by the council was rather straightforward:

- Report of the efforts taken to curtail hit and run traffic collisions.
- Identify additional resources, if any, which would assist in reducing the number of these incidents occurring within the City of Los Angeles.

It took 16 pages for the Department to respond that:

"The Department recognizes that a hit and run traffic collision is a serious crime perpetrated by irresponsible community members with no regard for their civic responsibility. Although current efforts are addressing the problem, the Department is committed to finding new and innovative ways to reduce the number of hit and runs and to aggressively apprehend and prosecute those who would seek to evade responsibility for their actions."

Translation...."Get out of my face!"

How can you possibly solve such a severe and deadly problem when your entire report tries to attack the messenger, make it look like the problems really not that bad and you refuse to acknowledge the obvious cause of the problem? Nowhere in the report does it mention unlicensed drivers or drivers whose licenses have been suspended or revoked. According to the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety unlicensed and drivers with suspended or revoked (S/R) licenses are 10 times more likely to flee than licensed drivers.

While that knowledge should have been generally known by Chief Beck and his people writing the report; on March 4, 2013 I sent a letter to the Chief and the Police Commission calling their attention to the AAA report. (attached) At the hearing I testified about the report. To emphasize the importance of these statistics I gave the following example. If the drivers of all 45,122 reported collisions were licensed and we assumed that they hit and ran at a rate 500% higher than the national average that would still leave 11,000 or more than half of the hit and runs unaccounted for. Did anyone on the commission even ask the Chief to comment on the AAA report? Before I could get back to my seat a motion was made to accept the report and voted on unanimously.

To come up with an estimate of what percentage of hit and runs unlicensed drivers and S/R drivers are responsible for we need to know how many drivers in each category exist in Los Angeles. Chief Beck has estimated that there are 400,000 unlicensed drivers in Los Angeles. I have filed a Public Records Request with the DMV for the number of S/R drivers. I haven't received the numbers yet but they have told me that they only have them by county. Maybe you can request the list by zip code. Additionally, both unlicensed and S/R drivers are 5 times more likely to cause fatal collisions. Can we make the same assumption for non-fatal collisions? Without even having the city S/R numbers yet I can guarantee that at a bare minimum 70 percent of all hit and runs are the responsibility of these drivers.

Chief Beck and the Los Angeles Police Commission have dug themselves into a hole with Special Order 7. They are promoting and encouraging unlicensed drivers to drive and now this new issue just emphasizes what a dangerous and bankrupt policy Special Order 7 is. The report on Special Order 7 in February stated that impounds were down 39% and fatalities and serious injury collisions were up 7%. Now we see hit and runs at a rate at least 4 times that of the United States. Despite all of the facts and all of the research they continue to protect unlicensed drivers at the expense of the law abiding public.

New mayor Eric Garcetti has stated he wants to get back to basics. What could be more basic than enforcing the law?

Sincerely,

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cc: Councilman Mitch Englander

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DRIVER STATUS	QTY	%	# of Collisions (45,000) (1 to 1)	# of Hit & Run (20,000) (1 to 1)	% of Collisions (5 to 1)	Number of Collisions (5 to 1)	% of Hit and Runs (10 to 1)	Number of Hit & Runs (10 to 1)
# of Licensed Drivers in Los Angeles	2,300,000	79.9%	33,559	15,981	44.3%	19,933	28.4%	5,690
# of Licensed Drivers in Los Angeles Less Suspended/Revoked	2,121,500	78.6%	33,001	15,715	42.3%	19,040	26.8%	5,366
# of Drivers with Suspended/Revoked Licenses Still Driving D/C	178,500	6.2%	2,604	1,240	17.2%	7,735	22.1%	4,416
# of Drivers with Suspended/Revoked Licenses Still Driving	178,500	6.6%	2,777	1,322	17.8%	8,010	22.6%	4,515
# of Unlicensed Drivers D/C	400,000	13.9%	5,836	2,779	38.5%	17,333	49.5%	9,895
# of Unlicensed Drivers	400,000	14.8%	6,222	2,963	39.9%	17,950	50.6%	10,118
Total S/R and Unlicensed D/C	578,500	20.1%	8,441	4,019	55.7%	25,067	71.6%	14,310
Total S/R and Unlicensed	578,500	21.4%	8,999	4,285	57.7%	25,960	73.2%	14,634

Total Drivers 2,878,500  
Total if S/R are Subtracted from # of Licensed Drivers 2,700,000

45,000 20,000

NOTES:

As of Jan 1, 2013 there were 238,000 people with suspended or revoked licenses. That number changes daily. For this report we are assuming that 75% continue to drive.

Double Counted (D/C) - The DMV was not clear as to whether or not the S/R drivers were subtracted from the total number of licensed drivers. This report runs the numbers both ways.

Sources:

- California Department of Motor Vehicles
- AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety
- Los Angeles Police Department

PRE SPECIAL ORDER 7									
	Oct 2011	Nov 2011	Dec 2011	Jan 2012	Feb 2012	Mar 2012	Apr 2012	Total	Avg per Month
Number of Impounds	5,004	4,574	4,226	5,214	4,873	5,341	4,254	33,486	4,784
Number of 30 Day Impounds	2,109	1,945	1,743	2,086	2,156	2,416	1,624	14,027	2,011
% 30 day Impounds	42.1%	42.5%	41.2%	40.0%	44.2%	45.2%	38.2%	42.0%	42.0%

POST SPECIAL ORDER 7										
	May 2012	June 2012	July 2012	Aug 2012	Sept 2012	Oct 2012	Nov 2012	Dec 2012	Jan 2013	Feb 2013
Number of Impounds	3,873	3,836	4,197	3,959	3,492	3,988	3,725	3,806	4,151	3,302
Number of 30 Day Impounds	1,120	1,028	1,166	1,137	970	1,100	1,072	1,033	1,115	853
% 30 day Impounds	28.9%	26.8%	27.8%	28.7%	27.8%	27.6%	28.8%	27.1%	26.9%	25.8%

	(A)	12500a Violation 1	12500a Violation 2	12500a Violation 3	12500a Violation 4	Total	Total Multi
14604a Violation 1	68	57	73	60	55	29	52
14604a Violation 2	1	3	1	1	1	2	2
14604a Violation 3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
14604a Violation 4	69	57	78	61	56	29	54
							59
							53
							31

- (A) Violation 1 (driving without a valid license) means that the individual was only charged with 12500a. Violation 2 means the driver was also charged with another offense. Violation 3 means the driver was charged with two other offenses, etc. The same applies for 14604 (owner allowing an unlicensed driver use of their car)
1. Since Special Order 7 began 30 day impounds have been cut in half
  2. Over 16,000 people were cited for two or more violations yet only 11,332 cars were impounded for 30 days
  3. There were 34,791 12500a violations but only 615 14604a citations. Could 98.23% of all unlicensed drivers own the cars they drive?
  4. Special Order 7 took effect on April 23, 2012. An unlicensed driver had to meet 4 criteria to avoid having his/her car impounded. In May 2012, the first full month the policy took effect is it possible that 2148 drivers met all 4 of the criteria? That would mean that 66% of all unlicensed drivers had insurance. According to Chief Beck about 25% of unlicensed drivers had insurance but in less than a month that number jumped to 66%.
  5. The day SO 7 was approved Chief Moore and Commissioner Mack both said we should review the results of the policy. Moore said in 6 months Mack said in 12 - 18 months. I filed a Public Records Request to obtain that information. It is unavailable because it is not being tracked.