

GOOD MORNING EVERYONE AND WELCOME TO MIAMI-DADE COUNTY!

FOR THOSE YOU WHO ARE NOT MIAMI RESIDENTS, I KNOW I'M BIASED BUT WELCOME TO THE BEST COUNTY IN THE WORLD!

AS MARTIN HEIKEL MENTIONED, TODAY WE ARE ANNOUNCING THE LAUNCH OF ZABCAB, A SMARTPHONE APP WHICH COULD CLOSE THE TECHNOLOGICAL DIVIDE BETWEEN TAXI CAB INDUSTRY AND THE STILL UNREGULATED RIDE-SHARING COMPETITORS.

TODAY COULD BE A MAJOR STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

ONE OF MY ADMINISTRATION'S GOALS HAS BEEN TO IMPROVE OUR TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY OPTIONS BY BRINGING THE TAXI CAB INDUSTRY INTO THE 21ST CENTURY SO THAT IT CAN COMPETE WITH OTHERS AND IMPROVE THE SERVICE THEY PROVIDE RIDERS.

I FIRMLY BELIEVE IN FREE MARKET PRINCIPLES, AND THE FACT IS THAT TOO MUCH REGULATION AND THE LACK OF ANY REGULATION ARE BOTH DETRIMENTAL FOR OUR COUNTY AND YOUR

INDUSTRY WHICH IS WHY I HAVE TASKED OUR NEW MIAMI-TRANSIT DIRECTOR ALICE BRAVO TO FINALIZE A PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE CHANGES FOR TAXIS AND RIDE-SHARING COMPANIES.

ZABCAB - WHICH I HAVE BEEN INFORMED COMPLIES WITH OUR CURRENT LOCAL REGULATIONS - IS NOT ONLY WELCOMED, IT IS IN MY OPINION A NECESSARY TOOL TO COMPETE IN 2015...

THROUGH ITS RATING SYSTEM, I'M VERY HOPEFUL THAT IT WILL ALSO LEAD TO A BIG IMPROVEMENT IN THE EXPERIENCES TAXI RIDERS HAVE BECAUSE AS WE ALL KNOW, CUSTOMER SERVICE IS KEY TO REPEAT.

KEEP IN MIND THAT THE FIRST IMPRESSION MANY IF NOT MOST OF THE 14.6 MILLION OVERNIGHT VISITORS WHO STAYED IN OUR COUNTY IN 2014 HAVE OF MIAMI, IS OF THE DRIVER OF A TAXI OR OTHER SERVICE WHICH TAKES THEM FROM MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TO HOTELS, PORTMIAMI OR ANY OTHER AREA IN OUR COMMUNITY.

INDEED, THE FIRST THING MANY OF OUR VISITORS DO WHEN THEY LAND AT MIA AND DISEMBARK OFF THEIR FLIGHTS IS TO TURN ON A SMART PHONE.

HAVING ZABCAB AVAILABLE TO THEM IS ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY FOR OUR TAXI INDUSTRY TO IMPROVE RIDERSHIP AND AGAIN, COMPETE IN A FAIRER MARKET PLACE.

AND THIS IS ALL VERY IMPORTANT FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY BECAUSE TOURISM SUPPORTS OVER HALF A MILLION JOBS HERE EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY.

I CONSIDER MYSELF PRETTY TECH SAVVY, BUT AS I THINK ABOUT IT, HAILING A TAXI HAS CHANGED A LOT SINCE I WAS A MUCH YOUNGER MAN...

ONCE AGAIN, THANK YOU ALL FOR BEING HERE TODAY AND ZABCAB, WELCOME TO MIAMI-DADE COUNTY.

I LOOK FORWARD TO REVIEWING THE PROGRESS WE MAKE AND TO CONTINUING TO HAVE MY ADMINISTRATION WORK WITH YOU TO IMPROVE CUSTOMER SERVICE AND MOBILITY OPTIONS FOR OUR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.

MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS MIAMI-DADE COUNTY.