

Mr Lau Chin Shek
Chairman Manpower Panel
c/o Legco
Fax No. 2877 8024

10 November 1999

Dear Mr Lau

Re: Foreign Domestic Help Drivers

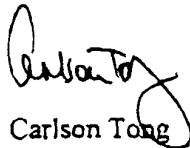
I understand Legco will meet on 16 November to further discuss this issue and I would like to comment as below:

1. I understand that the basis of the Motor Transport Workers General Union's initiative is based on the presumption that the foreign domestic helpers are taking away jobs from local workers. Yet in their own survey they only identified 407 such jobs taken up by foreign domestic helpers. If, as I expect, many of the 407 are doing driving which is "incidental" to their other domestic duties then in reality there would be very very few of the 407 "drivers" noted above replaced by local workers. This puts the issue into perspective; there would not appear to be many jobs to be gained by local drivers by perusing this. I believe that most of the employers who employ these "incidental drivers" would not have employed a local driver even if their salaries were competitive.
2. There are many employers of foreign domestic helpers who use their helper to do occasional driving duties. For example, foreign domestic helpers will take children to/from school or other activities, take dogs to the vet, drive dogs to country parks for exercise or drive to the supermarket when there is heavy shopping to be carried. All of this is incidental to domestic duties and is currently permitted by the regulations. If foreign domestic helpers were not permitted to drive full time, we would manage without the driving and would incur considerable personal inconvenience in the process instead of hiring local drivers.

3. Finally, I consider the proposed legislation to be highly discriminatory against certain races and I would hate to think that in the future enforcement of this law, Hong Kong becomes a place where if the color of your skin does not fit, you are liable to be stopped in the middle of the road having to prove your right to drive!!

I hope that you will take my above comments into consideration during your forthcoming session.

Yours sincerely



Carlson Tong