

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 12, 2023

Mr. Dara Khosrowshahi
Chief Executive Officer
Uber Technologies Inc.
1515 Third Street
San Francisco, California 94158

Dear Mr. Khosrowshahi,

We write in response to Uber’s recent announcement that minors are able to request rides and travel without an accompanying adult.¹ This change has benefits, in that it provides parents and guardians with additional reliable transportation options for their children that they can monitor and track. Given the reported prevalence of ride-hailing apps in sex trafficking, however, we are extremely concerned about the impact this change could have on the trafficking of minors.

Tragically, ride-hailing apps like Uber have been used for sex trafficking. Reports from survivors indicate that ride-hailing apps are among the most used means of transportation in sex trafficking.² Additionally, reports from the Connecticut Department of Children and Families indicate that sex traffickers in Connecticut have been using ride-hailing services to transport children—even when Uber did not permit children to travel solo. Moreover, reports of human trafficking have increased in recent years in many states, including Missouri and Georgia.³ Given this, the news that Uber now explicitly allows minors to ride unaccompanied is particularly alarming.

We recognize that Uber has taken action to combat trafficking on its ride-hailing service. Uber’s sharing of a Polaris-developed informational video on trafficking to all drivers and signing ECAPT International’s Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual

¹ Dara Khosrowshahi, “GO-GET 2023: Family Style,” *Uber Newsroom*, May 17, 2023, <https://www.uber.com/newsroom/go-get-2023/>.

² Kezban Yagci Sokat, “Understanding the Role of Transportation in Human Trafficking in California,” *Mineta Transportation Institute*, November 2022, <https://transweb.sjsu.edu/sites/default/files/2108-Yagci%20Sokat-Crimes-Involving-Transportation-Legislation-Stakeholders.pdf>; Brittany Anthony et al., “On-Ramps, Intersections, and Exit Routes: A Roadmap for Systems and Industries to Prevent and Disrupt Human Trafficking,” *Polaris*, July 2018, <https://polarisproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/A-Roadmap-for-Systems-and-Industries-to-Prevent-and-Disrupt-Human-Trafficking-Transportation-Industry.pdf>.

³ “Missouri,” National Human Trafficking Hotline, available at <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/statistics/missouri>; “Georgia,” National Human Trafficking Hotline, available at <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/statistics/georgia>.

Exploitation in Travel and Tourism were both important steps.⁴ However, we are concerned that the measures taken to date are insufficient to address trafficking on the company’s ride-hailing service, especially given Uber’s recent announcement.

Uber has the potential to aid survivors directly: nonprofits, government entities, and healthcare providers in states like Tennessee have cited transportation options as survivors’ top need.⁵ The company can and must do more to shield everyone—both children and adults—from trafficking.

We request a written response to the following questions by no later than June 26, 2023:

1. What steps does Uber take to combat the use of its ride-hailing service for human trafficking?
2. Is there a standardized reporting protocol for drivers who believe that a passenger may be trafficked?
3. What resources does Uber provide to drivers (e.g., information on the National Human Trafficking Hotline) to recognize and prevent human trafficking?
 - a. Are those resources available to all drivers?
 - b. How often are those resources updated?
 - c. In what languages are those resources offered?
4. If the answer to Question 3 includes training for drivers, please also answer the following:
 - a. Is the training online, in person, or both?
 - i. If virtual, is there a verification process to ensure participation by registrants?
 - ii. Are there assessments of knowledge gained from the training (e.g., pre- or post-training surveys)?
 - b. How frequently is each type of training offered?
 - c. Is the training mandatory?
 - i. If so, how often must drivers take the training?
 - ii. If not, what percentage of drivers take the training?
 - d. Does Uber provide incentives to encourage drivers to take the training? If not, why not?
 - e. Who developed the training curriculum?
 - f. How often is it updated?
 - g. In what languages is it offered?
 - h. Does the training vary depending on the city or region?

⁴ Brittany Anthony, “Spreading Education & Awareness to Help Fight Human Trafficking,” *Uber Newsroom*, Jan. 28, 2021, <https://www.uber.com/newsroom/spreading-awareness-to-help-fight-human-trafficking/>; “Help stop human trafficking,” Uber, <https://www.uber.com/us/en/community/safety/fighting-human-trafficking/>.

⁵ Ashleigh Chapman, Founder/CEO of Engage Together, email conversation with staff of U.S. Senator Marsha Blackburn, June 10, 2023.

- i. Has or does Uber plan to update its training now that minors will be riding unaccompanied in its vehicles?
5. We understand that Uber plans to automatically implement safeguards, such as PIN verification and RideCheck, in all minor rides.⁶ Please list and describe each safeguard, including the aforementioned ones, that Uber has implemented—or will implement—for minor safety.
 - a. If an adult calls a ride for a minor, how can a minor access Uber’s safety features if they don’t have access to a phone or the app?
6. Please describe what human trafficking resources (e.g., information on or referral to the National Human Trafficking Hotline) you currently provide or plan to provide to riders. What are Uber’s policies and practices to assist and support any riders who may be trafficked and transported via the company’s ride-hailing service?
7. Please explain Uber’s process for handling reports that its ride-hailing service was used for human trafficking.
 - a. If those reports come from law enforcement, what subsequent steps does the company take?
 - b. If those reports do not come from law enforcement, does the company report the incidents to law enforcement? If not, why not?
8. Does Uber keep records of reports that its ride-hailing service was used in sex trafficking or child sex trafficking?
 - a. If so—
 - i. Does the company keep records of which drivers provided rides to purported victims of trafficking?
 - ii. Does the company keep records of areas or addresses in which trafficking is frequently reported?
 - iii. Does the company share this information with law enforcement?
 - iv. Does the company share this information with anti-trafficking and services organizations?
 - b. If not, why not?
9. Does Uber investigate whether drivers providing rides to alleged trafficking victims were aware of or involved in said trafficking? Does Uber receive reports from law enforcement regarding the same?
 - a. If so, what steps does the company take to ensure involved drivers are permanently prohibited from driving for Uber?
 - b. What steps does the company take to ensure involved drivers do not provide ridesharing or -hailing services on other platforms?
 - c. If a driver is being investigated, does Uber request a suspension of that driver until the investigation is completed? If not, why not?

⁶ “Teen accounts on Uber,” Uber, <https://www.uber.com/us/en/ride/teens/#features-and-benefits>.

10. As a partner of ECPAT-USA and signatory of the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism, what resources are available to Uber? What policies has Uber developed since becoming an ECPAT-USA partner?
11. Please describe the status of Uber's current partnership with Polaris, including what activities you are currently undertaking or have plans to undertake with Polaris.
12. Please provide the number of people, and their job title(s), that Uber employs to ensure that its ride-hailing service is not used for human trafficking. Please provide this information as of May 31 for each year from 2018 through now.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. It is imperative that anti-trafficking remains a top priority. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senate



MARSHA BLACKBURN
United States Senate



JOSH HAWLEY
United States Senate



JON OSSOFF
United States Senate