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Uber's Campaign Platform: *Avoid Safety Costs, Shift Risk Burden, Evade Taxes and Fees*

ROCKVILLE, Md.— Millions will head to the polls tomorrow. One candidate worth close scrutiny is the transportation company Uber.

Uber's CEO has [proclaimed](#) that his company is a candidate in a "political campaign." So, what if Uber were an actual candidate? The "Who's Driving You?" public safety initiative decided to take a look at Uber through the lens of a political campaign. Here's how "Uber the Candidate" stacks up on the issues:

The Candidate's Roots

Misappropriating the term "ridesharing" was the first move in a long line of deceptions by so-called ridesharing companies aimed at avoiding established safety costs required of for-hire vehicles. But "ridesharing" is synonymous with "carpooling," and Uber is not a carpool service. It is a taxicab company that makes millions of dollars yet somehow insists it doesn't need to obtain licensing, purchase primary commercial auto liability insurance coverage to protect passengers and others, or run fingerprint-based background checks conducted by law enforcement agencies on its drivers.

"By attempting to exploit an imaginary loophole to avoid the essential operating costs of a transportation company—items such as proper insurance, criminal background checks and licensing—Uber is able to offer cheaper service. Unfortunately, the majority of these business costs go toward protecting public safety. Uber the Candidate clearly doesn't care about the danger it poses to the public as long as the profits come pouring in," said Dave Sutton, spokesperson for "Who's Driving You?"

Transferring the Financial Burden of Risk to Others

By distancing itself from responsibility, Uber [transfers its risk](#) to its drivers, passengers, third parties such as pedestrians on the street, victims of property damage, cities, states, hospital emergency rooms, and even other private drivers paying increased personal insurance premiums.

"It's a business model based on low overhead and no responsibility," Sutton said. "That's good for its Wall Street and Silicon Valley investors, but bad for people when they get hurt, as we've seen in case after case. Uber the Candidate puts profits and investors first, and the people's safety dead last."

Avoiding Local Taxes and Fees

Taxicab and limousine companies pay licensing, operating and inspection fees, as well as corporate taxes, among other costs. By adopting the stance that it is an Internet-based technology company—despite the fact that it physically places for-hire vehicles on local streets—Uber avoids paying its fair share of fees. Because Uber refuses to submit to taxicab regulations in the vast majority of cities in which it operates, Uber does not pay licensing fees to most local communities. When Uber drivers are fined for refusing to abide by local licensing public safety requirements, such as proper insurance coverage, Uber uses its war chest of investor money to pay these fines.

“Uber tries to buy its way out of any problem it encounters. Its Wall Street and Silicon Valley investors have essentially given the company a credit card so it can run wild like a trust-fund kid on Spring break, bailing itself out of problems every time it lands in trouble,” Sutton said. “But Uber the Candidate can’t outrun its responsibilities forever.”

Wall Street vs. Main Street

Uber cynically says anyone opposing the company is against innovation. This is an obvious red-herring to divert attention from the reality that a major corporation is killing small American transportation businesses that have played by the rules for years. After all, the average licensed taxicab company in America operates between 30 and 50 vehicles. Uber operates tens of thousands of vehicles worldwide. “Uber the Candidate has launched a war in which Wall Street is trying to screw Main Street,” Sutton said.

[Uber’s dubious job-creation claims](#) are severely undercut by the fact that [Uber drivers recently staged an international day of protest](#). Uber has also been criticized for its [“shady firing policy.”](#)

Founded in America, Uber the Candidate Sets Up Global Headquarters in...the Netherlands. Why? [Uber is reported to be the highest valued venture-backed company in the world](#). According to its own terms and agreements, San Francisco-founded [Uber has established a corporate headquarters in the Netherlands](#). This is a move multinational corporations undertake to avoid taxes earned on profits in the countries in which they operate. Such moves, known as a “tax inversion,” have been roundly criticized by politicians in America and overseas.

“Has Candidate Uber joined the tax inversion? Many people, including President Obama, consider tax inversion unpatriotic,” Sutton said. “Why would any political leader or city endorse a company that so obviously avoids its public safety responsibilities, and is determined to skirt fees and taxes?”

ABOUT US:

‘Who’s Driving You?’ is a public-safety initiative designed to educate the public about the dangers of unlicensed transportation companies. It is an initiative of the Taxicab, Limousine & Paratransit Association, an international non-profit trade association whose membership consists of 1,100 licensed transportation companies. For more information, visit www.WhosDrivingYou.org, follow us on Twitter (@WhosDrivingYou) and follow us on Facebook (facebook.com/WhosDrivingYou)

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