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Uber Continues to Speed Away From Responsibility ***Assaults, Kidnapping and Death Continue to Point To*** ***Massive Insurance Gaps for Uber and Lyft***

ROCKVILLE, Md.— Charges of assaults, a kidnapping and the death of a child continue to draw attention to the so-called “ridesharing” industries claims that it is not responsible when things go wrong.

In the latest string of problems, police have charged an Uber driver with kidnapping an inebriated woman and taking her to a motel for the night. News reports say a valet at a bar hailed an Uber driver to take her home. Uber, however, says it has no record of the transaction and quickly distanced itself from the incident stating it is “certainly not clear that this is an Uber-related incident.”

The news broke as two other incidents placed Uber on the defensive. One was in Oklahoma City where a passenger is suing an Uber driver for punching him in the face and sustaining injuries that will require dental surgery. In another, an uberX driver with a 2009 felony conviction and pending 2012 felony charge was charged in San Francisco with battery for allegedly hitting a passenger.

These incidents and more are also likely to draw more scrutiny about lax background checks, since neither Uber nor Lyft run their drivers through fingerprinting and police or FBI databases, as required for the vast majority of taxicab drivers. Uber and Lyft, as unlicensed transportation companies in most communities, are unable to even access those public safety databases in the first place, relying instead on cheaper, less effective computer searches.

“This is where transportation and insurance officials need to take note,” said Dave Sutton, spokesperson of the national ‘Who’s Driving You?’ campaign aimed at drawing attention to the serious safety and responsibility problems with companies such as Uber and Lyft. “An Uber driver supposedly vetted by Uber provides a ride and Uber says it isn’t sure it bears responsibility. This puts the issue of Uber’s paper-thin insurance guarantees and background checks squarely in conflict with its claims that it values safety.”

The licensed, professional taxi and limousine industry ensures that its drivers and the vehicles they operate are covered 100 percent of the time by primary commercial automobile liability insurance. Uber and Lyft are seeking a bill in California that would allow them to turn their insurance on when a driver has his app open, and off when it is closed.

“App-on, App-off insurance simply is not good enough,” Sutton said. “What happens in the growing number of cases when an Uber or Lyft driver is flagged down on the street by a passenger paying cash? Or what happens to this woman who accepted an Uber ride, even though it may have been arranged by someone else? The multi-billion dollar ridesharing industry is driving its vehicles full-speed through its massive insurance gaps, avoiding its responsibility in favor of profits.”

Fifteen states plus the District of Columbia have now issued insurance warnings about “ridesharing.” San Francisco’s district attorney this week called for tougher guidelines and oversight of the industry. The concerns have been raised after several high-profile incidents even before the alleged kidnapping this week. One deadly case involved an uberX driver who struck and killed a child in a San Francisco crosswalk six months ago, an accident for which Uber says it is not responsible, even though the driver was on the street looking for his next uberX passenger.

ABOUT US:

‘Who’s Driving You?’ is a public safety campaign 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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