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## Uber sued over 6-year-old's traffic death

By Karen Gullo, Bloomberg News

Bloomberg

11:20 PM CST, January 28, 2014

Uber Technologies, the app-based, on-demand transportation service, was sued for wrongful death by the parents of a 6-year-old killed last month by a car linked to the company.

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Sofia Liu's parents sued Uber and the driver who hit the girl and seriously injured her mother and brother as they crossed a street on a green light on New Year's Eve in San Francisco's Tenderloin neighborhood, according to the lawsuit.

The complaint, filed Monday in state court in San Francisco, is the first wrongful death suit against Uber, Christopher Dolan, the family's attorney, said in a statement. The case could become another setback for the company as it strives to convince regulators that its service is safe. Uber has faced criticism in some cities for using drivers who don't have taxi or limousine licenses.

Uber said Jan. 1 that the driver was "a partner of Uber" who wasn't providing services on the Uber system during the time of the accident.

"This tragedy did not involve a vehicle or provider doing a trip on the Uber system," the company said. Andrew Noyes, a spokesman for Uber, said the company had no comment on the lawsuit.

The San Francisco-based company, which raised \$258 million from Google's venture-capital arm and other investors last year, valuing the company at \$3.5 billion, Chief Executive Officer Travis Kalanick said last year in an interview. The company connects its registered drivers with riders through a mobile-phone application that is also used for credit card payments. The company, founded in 2009, takes a cut of the fares booked through the system.

The driver in the Dec. 31 accident, Syed Muzaffar, 57, of Union City, Calif., was logged into the application, had previously picked up a rider and was waiting to be contacted by another rider when he turned into the intersection and failed to see the family in the crosswalk, said Graham Archer, his attorney.

"He is absolutely distraught," Archer said in a phone interview. Muzaffar was arrested at the scene and released on \$300,000 bail. The accident is under investigation and the San Francisco District Attorney's office hasn't decided whether to charge Muzaffar, Archer said.

Alex Bastian, a spokesman for District Attorney George Gascon, didn't immediately respond to a voice-mail message seeking comment on the case.

Archer said he disagreed with Uber's interpretation of its involvement and that the dispute will be resolved in court.

"If Uber's position is correct, then they as a company are allowed to externalize the costs of doing business to the people in the streets around their drivers," he said.

The use of the Uber app by its drivers in transit violates California law prohibiting drivers from using mobile phones unless they are hands-free, Dolan said. Uber has control over its drivers because they are required to apply to the company, have their vehicle inspected and pass a company-conducted driving and criminal history background check, according to the complaint.

The family's complaint says the driver was logged on to the Uber application and was distracted when he struck the three. The Liu family also claims negligence and seeks unspecified damages.

Dolan alleged Uber is denying insurance protection to cover its driver and the Lius since there was no passenger in the car when the accident occurred.

"These companies are only viable when people look at the app and see these empty cars," Dolan said in a phone interview.

Airbnb, a website that lets users rent out their homes, announced plans in 2011 to offer a \$50,000 property protection guarantee after visitors vandalized a host's apartment.

\_ With assistance from Mark Milian in San Francisco.



Mayor Ed Murray's Blog

SEARCH

Statement on proposed regulations for transportation network companies

March 5, 2014

Mayor Murray released the following statement today regarding regulations on taxis, for-hire vehicles and transportation network companies (commonly referred to as ridesharing services):



"Taxis, for-hire vehicles and transportation network companies all help make our roads safe and our city accessible. They provide access to jobs and economic opportunity for many first-time entrants into the job market, and for those looking for flexible full- or part-time work. They make it possible to live in Seattle without a car – or to leave a car at home – and help create a more vibrant nightlife.

Taxis, for-hire vehicles and transportation network companies all have a place in Seattle.

Last Thursday the City Council Committee on Taxi, For-Hire and Limousine Regulations voted on a set of new regulations for TNCs to help ensure safety for passengers, drivers and the general public.

I was pleased to work with the Committee and with the stakeholders on finding a balanced proposal.

From the time my office entered this discussion, I have had four main concerns:

**First**, my priority was safety for all, and I wanted to ensure that any final regulations on TNCs include insurance and safety requirements commensurate to taxis and for-hire vehicles currently licensed in Seattle, which the Committee adopted. These safety requirements, once enacted, will enable the TNCs to become licensed and to operate legally and safely in Seattle. And let me add, the City will enforce them.

**Second**, I recognized that current law-abiding taxi and for-hire license holders and drivers played by a set of rules long-established by the City, and so wanted to ensure that these drivers got some relief from some of the most burdensome regulations. This includes changes to insurance regulations that limit the number of available insurance carriers, streamlining the required training course to focus on safety, increasing the number of available taxi licenses, and allowing for-hire drivers street-hailing rights.

**Third**, I advocated all along for a comprehensive review of the entire regulatory framework of the industry, in addition to the changes noted above, which the Committee adopted. The industry is heavily regulated, and we must explore additional ways to 'level the playing field' and increase efficiency and innovation in the industry, so all players have the opportunity to succeed. All of Seattle – including passengers, drivers, and local business owners – will benefit from a clear, modernized set of regulations that promote good business and fair play.

**Lastly**, it was my goal to avoid caps on TNCs, which I do not support on principle. However as a short-term measure, I can support a reasonable, temporary cap. We

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Mayor Murray on Twitter

helped negotiate a cap on the number of vehicles 'live' on the TNC system at any given time, which is more reasonable and more flexible than a cap on the number of drivers. And we helped negotiate a cap that, while lower than I would have liked, is temporary. I also believe, that after twelve months, it only makes sense to look at the data to determine the impacts of the TNCs on the industry and assess whether the temporary cap level needs adjustment. I would like to thank Councilmember Clark for supporting this approach, and I strongly encourage the full City Council to include this 12-month review when it considers the legislation at its meeting on March 10th."


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For more information on the work that's been done by the City Council on this issue, [please visit the Council website.](#)

## Will smartphone 'cars for hire' backfire south of Interstate 30?

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By Rev. Jerry Christian and Rev. Stephen C. Nash

Published: 10 October 2013 06:33 PM

Updated: 10 October 2013 06:33 PM

From our vantage point as southern Dallas pastors, we often see community trends developing before they become common knowledge. The taxi vs. smartphone "cars for hire" competition has turned into a very nasty fight. And our community may become the biggest loser.

Taxicabs are an extension of public transportation. They are regulated by city ordinance and must provide 24-hour service, seven days a week, to all areas of Dallas.

In contrast, right now, the leading "car for hire" service provider cherry-picks and profiles its customers. To hire a vehicle through, for example, the Uber car service, a potential customer must use a credit card and pay through his or her smartphone. Unlike taxis, these "black-car" services don't accept cash. According to its app-based website, debit and prepaid credit cards are not accepted either.

That means black-car service is out of reach for a number of our members since debit and prepaid cards may be their only credit cards. Additionally, many have regular cellphones, not smartphones, which means they can't order the app-based service.

Unfortunately, people of color know a lot about profiling. From red-lining loans to walking at your own risk in upscale neighborhoods, "profiling" to us conjures up ugly barriers.

Our history is full of documented profiling. And profiling, whether overt or done in plain sight, has not been good for us.

Our community leadership must proactively monitor what happens with the taxi vs. black-car tug-of-war. Then we must speak with a clear, strong and unified voice to our elected officials.

This issue is important because a number of our worshippers and community residents use vehicles for hire, including paratransit services, in their daily routine. If left to fight it out on their own terms, commercial "vehicles for hire" will soon leave or severely cut service to southern Dallas, an area where about 45 percent of the city population lives.

Why are we sending a clarion call to those who represent us to do their duty in regulating balanced "for hire" vehicle service? If we remain silent, taxis and the limo-style "rides for hire" will redeploy their vehicles north of Interstate 30, focusing on Uptown and area airports.

Right now, if we were to grade taxi companies serving southern Dallas, we would give taxis a service-to-community grade of C. If we were to grade the black-car services, we would give an I for "incomplete" because there simply are not enough of them now serving our community.

If the city does not force all service providers to play by the same regulated rules, finding a taxi in southern Dallas may become as rare as finding a black car for hire.

The Dallas City Council can fix this.

It is our prayer that Mayor Mike Rawlings and the entire council will continue to help Dallas "Grow South" by providing uniform vehicle-for-hire service.

It matters to the two of us. It matters to our organizations. It matters to our members. And most of all, it matters to our already underserved southern Dallas community.

*The Rev. Jerry Christian pastors Kirkwood CME Church and serves as president of African American Pastors Coalition. Rev. Stephen C. Nash pastors Mount Tabor Baptist Church and serves as president of Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Greater Dallas and Vicinity. They may be contacted at [mttabordallas@aol.com](mailto:mttabordallas@aol.com).*

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I'm in control and I'm  
not letting go.

*Jennifer Hudson*

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## Taxi industry lawsuit against city on ride-sharing regulation



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Taxi owners and cab drivers are going after their unlicensed competitors in a federal lawsuit against the city.

**By Kim Geiger**

**Tribune reporter**

12:24 p.m. CST, February 6, 2014

Chicago taxi owners, taxi drivers and the Illinois Transportation Trade Association have filed a lawsuit against the city of Chicago over its relaxed approach to so-called ride-sharing services like Uber, Lyft and Sidecar.

The suit comes a day after Mayor Rahm Emanuel proposed licensing of commercial ride-sharing companies that would impose rules on hiring and training of nonprofessional drivers and inspection of their vehicles. The proposal hit opposition from taxi companies, who say it doesn't go far enough to regulate the emerging car services.

It is the first time that taxi owners have sued a city for allowing the companies to operate outside of the rules that apply to traditional taxis, the group said.

The suit, filed in the United District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, alleges that by failing to regulate commercial ride-sharing services, the city has allowed for discrimination against customers who are disabled, those who don't have smart phones or credit cards, and those who live in less affluent parts of the city.

"This lawsuit is about whether low-income areas of the city, and people with disabilities, are going to be left without taxi services," Michael Shakman, a lawyer representing the plaintiffs, said at a morning news conference.

"Unfortunately, the Emanuel administration has tolerated an unlawful taxi caste system created by Uber, Lyft and Sidecar."

Those companies aren't required to purchase the expensive taxi medallions that are required of traditional taxi companies. Also unlike traditional companies, they are not required to serve all parts of the city, they can set their own fares, and they are available only to customers who have smart phones and credit cards.

"It is an exclusionary, elitist taxi system operated side-by-side with the lawful, highly regulated taxi system that our clients and their customers have engaged in, with the city's consent and requirement, for many years," Shakman said.

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# How Uber's Taxi App is Changing Cities

Traditional cab companies aren't thrilled about competing with Travis Kalanick, who aims to make speedy private car service available to everyone.

DEREK THOMPSON | NOV 13 2013, 3:30 PM ET

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"D.C. is a real pain in my butt," Uber CEO Travis Kalanick told the audience at the [Washington Ideas Forum](#) this afternoon.

In a wide-ranging interview with James Fallows of *The Atlantic*, Kalanick introduced his company as part of a new wave of tangible technology that is changing urban policy and city protectionism, starting with the taxi lobby. In Washington, he said, a late-night attempt to pass a law to effectively ban Uber prompted a voracious social media response, including 37,000 tweets, which eventually defeated the so-called Uber Amendment. The experience created a "playbook" that Kalanick is taking across the country, and overseas, as he fights to popularize his app, which connects wannabe passengers with on-demand drivers.

There are 13,250 cabs in New York City today, he said, the same number as in the early 1950s. In cities like New York, where people's demand for transportation has outstripped the supply of cabs, services like Uber are "like an injection of oxygen," Kalanick said.



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Still, he stressed that Uber's guiding principle isn't to become a headache for city governments. Rather, he said, Uber is the business of delivering cars in five minutes. "Our motto is 'Everyone's Private Driver,'" he said. The company, most famous for its black-car service, has come down-market with ride-sharing products like UberX that make on-demand auto transportation affordable to people who couldn't afford lobby-protected cab rates.

Ironically, the one thing that could make Uber's life easier is more government. "The lack of involvement from the federal [government] makes my job harder," Kalanick said, because interstate rules could theoretically ban regulations that keep Uber from competing in individual markets. But he's confident that the regulations will fall on their own. Either the cities change the laws, he said, or else they're forced to publicly support "really bad laws."

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GHUHN WKRP SVRQ is a senior editor at *The Atlantic*, where he oversees the Business Channel.  
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not letting go.

*Jennifer Hudson*

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### City Limits

A blog for and about people who live in the city. A place for news and commentary about Milwaukee neighborhoods, government and urban life

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## City panel plans to discuss Uber ride service

By *Don Walker of the Journal Sentinel*

Feb. 19, 2014

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Members of the city's Public Works Committee on Wednesday will discuss the arrival in Milwaukee of Uber, the new mobile application that connects passengers with drivers of vehicles for hire and ridesharing services.

Ald. Robert Bauman said Tuesday the city attorney's office had told him they believe Uber is, in effect, running a taxi and limousine service. And as a result, the service must be licensed by the city.

Bauman said he planned to ask Uber operators to appear before the committee at a future date and explain its operation.

The Uber software allows people who need a ride to connect with a driver via mobile app, text message or the web.

Under the system, the driver is supposed to arrive in minutes. The technology also allows the user to track the arrival of the ride and get a text message when the driver arrives. Payment is made by credit card, which is on file with the company.

According to Uber, the technology also allows the user to see a picture of the driver and the car they're driving.

The app is available for iPhone, Android and Blackberry devices.

Natalia Montalvo, a Uber spokeswoman, said the question of licensing is "really intended for a transportation company.

"Uber is a technology company, not a transportation company. Uber is revolutionizing the way consumers have access to efficient, reliable, licensed and insured transportation in Milwaukee. Like OpenTable for

restaurants or Expedia for airline tickets, Uber is a facilitator of a quality experience, but does not provide actual transportation service."

That difference in opinion, with the city taking the stand that Uber is a service subject to licensing and Uber arguing it is a tech company, would suggest the matter will end up in court.

Uber started the service last week with its UberBLACK service. UberBLACK connects commercially licensed livery drivers and riders. Montalvo said the company was pleased so far with the Milwaukee market.

In other cities around the country, Uber has been sued by taxi companies.

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**PhloatinDave** - Feb 19 at 10:28 AM - [Report Abuse](#)

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Yeah poor Ameican United taxi service and there TERRIBLE service. I can call and never get a cab, get a cab two hours later, and they can never give me a time. Now I have started using Yellow Cab and they ROCK! Usually around 20 mins. I have used Uber with friends in other cities and it is great. It is a free market and when you offer crappy service and solutions guess what you will lose out when something comes to the market that works. PFFFT on the Taxi service. Maybe if it would not be crappy service for so many years this would not be a problem....

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**Corey** - Feb 19 at 9:49 AM - [Report Abuse](#)

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I haven't used this service, but people who have say it is fantastic. Convenient, safe, and efficient. Which is why the toads on the Milwaukee Common Council are freaking out about it.

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