

# NATIONAL TAXI WORKERS ALLIANCE

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*AFL-CIO, Intl. Transport Workers' Federation*

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## **Taxi Workers Respond to California Labor Commission Game Changer Ruling: Uber Drivers Are Employees**

*Decision Affirms That the Law is Catching Up to Uber*

*San Francisco Drivers Ready for Uber Showdown at National Mayor's Conference*

“California Labor Commission’s ruling today that Uber drivers are employees and entitled to protections under the law is empowering, gratifying and foretelling: finally, a set of laws Uber has not been allowed to violate or skirt. There is no doubt that more drivers will stand up, more states will verify their employee status, and all will boil over into federal rulings on drivers’ right to collectively organize without retaliation or fear,” said Bhairavi Desai, President of the National Taxi Workers Alliance.

This could have a game changing impact on a company that profiteers from breaking laws and cutting costs. Uber has left markets when required to carry insurance standards still subservient to taxis and for-hire-vehicles, but higher than their lobbying goals. On the other hand, a decision affirming drivers’ rights in the share-the-scrap economy may be the wake up call to require consumer rights as well.

The decision comes on the eve of the National Mayor’s Conference where San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee has pulled out the red carpet for Uber to wine and dine. **The San Francisco Taxi Workers Alliance is organizing actions throughout the conference, including a picket line in front of Uber Headquarters on June 22<sup>nd</sup> challenging Mayors to stand out the tour and stand instead with grieved workers.**

The California Labor Commission’s decision is consistent with findings by both state commissions and federal regulators that indeed for-hire-vehicle companies which, among other factors, dispatch fares, set the rates, and discipline at will, indeed exert control over drivers’ working conditions and as such, the driver is entitled to employee benefits such as Unemployment Insurance or protections to collectively organize. If it looks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it’s a duck.

“In their quest to maximize commissions on each dispatch, the Silicon Valley companies have refused to abide by bare minimum commercial licensing requirements, never mind the long-established laws for taxis and FHV’s regarding insurance, vehicle standards, accessibility, driver security background checks

and trainings, and price protection. And at several steps, they have been enabled by legislators complicit in selling out drivers, riders and their own constituents at a loss from the lack of local tax revenue,” said San Francisco Taxi Workers Alliance Board Member and veteran driver Kamaljeet Singh.

“Uber has wreaked havoc on the lives of hundreds of thousands of taxi and black car drivers across this country; felt more poignantly nowhere other than in their home state of California, by their very neighbors. To have a decision upholding worker protections in the share-the-scrap economy come out of California, is a light at the end of a dreary dark tunnel which has left thousands of taxi drivers impoverished and battle-worn,” added SFTWA Board Member Chakib Ayadi.