
TNC Discussion | Unaccompanied Minors: Uber Teen Program in Oregon

Introduction: The Uber Teen program, which involves Uber TNC drivers transporting unaccompanied minors, raises significant concerns regarding safety, liability, and regulation. This topic warrants attention due to the age of the passengers involved and the encroachment of a corporation determining what is appropriate for Oregon.

Safety: The transport of unaccompanied minors by TNC drivers raises safety concerns. The transportation of minors on TNC platforms is not regulated, which may necessitate additional protective measures and regulations to ensure their well-being.

Liability: The program presents challenges regarding liability. If incidents occur involving unaccompanied minors, accountability may be complicated by corporate policies that shield the company from civil suits through arbitration.

Regulatory Oversight: The implementation of the Uber Teen program seems to have occurred without prior discussions with the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT), the TNC Driver Advisory Committee, or the broader community. This lack of engagement undermines the democratic process and raises questions about who decides what is appropriate for Oregonians.

Corporate Infringement: Uber, a corporation headquartered in San Francisco, has assumed an entitlement, in the absence of regulation, to determine what is appropriate for Oregonians. Decisions that impact the safety and well-being of the community should not be dictated by an entity that is shielded from consequences through arbitration and does not share the local responsibilities or collateral costs inherent to such determinations.

Impact on Local Resources: The Uber Teen program may impose additional demands on local law enforcement and community resources, potentially reallocating attention and funding from other urgent priorities essential for maintaining public safety and community welfare.

Conclusion: The Uber Teen program raises concerns about the safety of minors using TNC services in Oregon. The right and responsibility to determine what is permissible in the state, particularly regarding the safety and well-being of minors, rests solely with parents and collectively with Oregonians as the electorate. It is not the prerogative of a corporation headquartered in San Francisco, which does not share the risks and responsibilities associated with the local operation of the Uber Teen program, is shielded from civil suits through arbitration, and whose leadership is comprised of individuals who are neither registered to vote in Oregon nor residing in the state, to decide what is appropriate for Oregonians.

Proposed Action

The Portland Bureau of Transportation TNC Driver Advisory Committee shall hold a vote to either support or reject the continued operation of the Uber Teen program.

- If the Portland Bureau of Transportation TNC Driver Advisory Committee votes in support of the continued operation of the Uber Teen program, the committee will either cease discussion on the matter or offer constructive recommendations to both PBOT and Uber moving forward.
- If the Portland Bureau of Transportation TNC Driver Advisory Committee votes to reject the continued operation of the Uber Teen program, its members will draft an official committee request that Uber cease and desist from operating the Uber Teen program in Oregon.

The Portland Bureau of Transportation TNC Driver Advisory Committee represents the constituents of Portland, composed of individuals who live and work in the city and have been appointed to the committee by the Portland Bureau of Transportation. Therefore, failure to comply with the committee's official request would demonstrate a willful disregard for our community and the people of Portland, Oregon.

Recommendations for Addressing Concerns

Uber: Uber should rectify the situation by ceasing the operation of the Uber Teen program in Oregon and actively engaging with local stakeholders, including parents, community members, and relevant organizations, to evaluate and enhance the program's safety protocols. This engagement should promote transparency and collaboration with those most affected. All considerations should be approved by local stakeholders prior to the program's implementation.

Regulatory: The Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) should be consulted and afforded adequate time to develop comprehensive regulations specifically addressing TNC services for minors. These regulations must prioritize the safety and security of unaccompanied minors utilizing Uber Teen and other TNC services.

Oregon's Right to Determination: Oregonians possess the exclusive right, which shall not be infringed, to determine what is best for their state. The interests and well-being of Oregon's residents must always take precedence over corporate interests, ensuring that decisions align with the community's values and needs.