**10,000+ UBER RAPE/SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVORS CAN NOW JOIN MASSIVE FEDERAL COURT LITIGATION THAT WILL**

**“CHANGE AMERICAN RIDESHARE INDUSTRY FOREVER”**

***JPML Petitioner and Leading Rideshare Sexual Assault Attorney Rachel Abrams: Uber Is Aware of the Problem, Refuses to Make Meaningful Policy Changes for Increased Profits; Historic Multidistrict Litigation Seeks to End a Sexual Assault Epidemic.***

**SAN FRANCISCO – OCTOBER 11, 2023 –** Rape and sexual assault lawsuits from across the country against Uber have been [consolidated into a federal court in the Northern District of California](https://www.jpml.uscourts.gov/sites/jpml/files/MDL-3084-Transfer_Order-9-23.pdf), before one Judge. Over 10,000 rape and sexual assault allegations have been reported by Uber Technologies, Inc. (Uber) in the past few years, and those survivors, as well as the ones who have yet to step forward, will have an opportunity to seek justice.

Leading rideshare sexual assault attorney and petitioner for the centralized action, Rachel Abrams of the law firm Peiffer Wolf Carr Kane Conway & Wise (Peiffer Wolf), has dedicated her career to representing survivors of sexual assault and has been involved in rideshare sexual assault litigation since the very first cases surfaced. She is coordinating with a team of plaintiffs’ attorneys in the centralized federal litigation (Multidistrict Litigation or “MDL”) for all survivors nationally. On a separate but parallel track, Abrams is also central to the in-state mass litigation (California Judicial Council for Coordinated Proceedings or “JCCP”) on behalf of California residents who were sexually assaulted by Uber drivers in California.

Every week, Peiffer Wolf is filing dozens of cases against Uber. Abrams estimates that there are tens of thousands of survivors of sexual assault with claims against Uber. On October 11, she held a news conference to discuss the historic MDL and preview what to expect next as the litigation unfolds.

Kevin Conway, managing partner, Peiffer Wolf, said: **“This is one of the largest federal sexual assault litigations ever, and it will undoubtedly change the American rideshare industry forever. In the future, we’ll look back with disbelief that Uber drivers were once permitted to operate without any meaningful or effective oversight. By speaking out and filing lawsuits against Uber, these brave survivors are reclaiming their voice. And that voice quickly becomes a chorus. And that chorus can bring a company and an entire industry to its knees.”**

Rachel Abrams, partner at Peiffer Wolf, said: **“We know from Uber’s own data that its policies and safety protocols are not working. The company claims that rapes and sexual assaults against passengers have decreased in recent years, however that claim is highly dubious – Uber’s own internal data shows that the rate of assaults per booking may have actually increased.”**

Abrams added: **“Thousands of sexual assaults are reported to Uber every year, yet it refuses to make necessary safety changes, such as: mandatory in-vehicle video surveillance, extensive background checks with fingerprinting, sexual harassment education, and a zero-tolerance policy for drivers who break the rules. Sexual assaults will continue to happen every day until there are cameras installed in every Uber vehicle.”**

Uber has been aware since 2014 that drivers were physically assaulting, sexually assaulting, and raping passengers. The company’s response has been slow and inadequate. While Uber has publicly acknowledged this sexual-assault crisis—including the publication of Uber’s U.S. Safety Report in December 2019—Uber has failed to implement basic safety measures necessary to prevent serious sexual and/or physical assaults. Uber has not released any sexual-assault data for 2021 or 2022. Uber’s decision to withhold that data prevents passengers and the public from understanding the true rate at which such assaults are still occurring.

**Former CEO, Travis Kalanick** - Travis Kalanick intentionally performed the act of hiring drivers without fingerprinting them, without running them through the FBI databases, and using fast and shallow background checks. When he took these actions, he knew or should have known that it was highly probable that harm would result.

When Uber’s current Chief Executive Officer, Dara Khosrowshahi, assumed that role in August 2017, he continued Kalanick’s policy of hiring drivers without biometric fingerprinting to be run through the FBI database. This was a very intentional and deliberate decision, evidenced by Uber’s active lobbying and resistance against municipalities or regulatory bodies implementing any kind of biometric fingerprinting requirement for drivers.

**Current CEO, Dana Khosrowshahi** - To this day, Uber’s policy is not to report criminal activity to law-enforcement authorities, including allegations of sexual assault. Uber is proud of this policy and feels “very strongly” that it is not Uber’s job to go to the police on behalf of customers when an Uber driver rapes an Uber passenger. Khosrowshahi has supported this non-reporting policy.

**Safe Rides Fee** - In 2014, Uber started charging Uber passengers an extra $1 for a “Safe Rides Fee” for each trip. When Uber announced the “Safe Rides Fee,” it told the public that the fee “supports our continued efforts to ensure the safest possible platform for Uber riders and drivers, including an industry-leading background check process, regular motor vehicle checks, driver safety education, development of safety features in the app, and insurance.”

The “Safe Rides Fee” was not split with drivers. Uber collected its “Safe Rides Fee” and made hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue. Uber did not use this money for passenger safety but instead pocketed the money for its own profits at the cost of passenger safety.

Rider safety was never Uber’s concern. Growth is. To increase growth, which required not only new riders but new drivers, the executives at Uber made it as easy as possible for Uber drivers to sign up. They used a background-check system designed to get drivers approved as quickly and conveniently as possible.

**Uber directly markets itself as a safer transportation service for young women** - On a “Women’s Safety” page on its website, Uber advertised that it was “driving change for women’s safety,” specifically representing that “sexual assault and gender-based violence don’t belong anywhere in our communities, which is why Uber is committed to help stop incidents before they happen” and touting its “safety features and education” and “transparency.” Through such representations, and as the company grapples with tens of thousands of ongoing rape and sexual assaults being reported, Uber continues to encourage women to trust its services to secure safe transportation.

**Solutions** - Despite being aware of the thousands of incidents of sexual and physical assault, Uber has yet to mandate the following safety measures: in-vehicle surveillance (audio and video); extensive background checks, including fingerprinting; driver training on interactions with passengers; sexual harassment education and training; a zero-tolerance policy for drivers who deviate from expected behavior and protocols mandating immediate termination; creation and institution of a system encouraging customer reporting and reporting to local authorities; and adequate monitoring of customer complaints by well-trained and effective customer-service representatives.

Abrams added: **“We’ve always been told not to get into a car with strangers. Yet, Uber continues to mislead the public into believing that it is safe, as it avoids responsibility for passenger safety. It’s possible to make Uber rides safe, but major changes are necessary, and mandatory cameras in every Uber vehicle is the first step. We’ll be fighting for survivors and standing alongside our incredibly brave clients until we get there.”**

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**Peiffer Wolf Carr Kane Conway & Wise** is a national law firm with offices in San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, New Orleans, Cleveland, Youngstown, and St. Louis. Visit [www.sexualassaultvictimadvocates.com/](http://www.sexualassaultvictimadvocates.com/) for more information.