

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Licensing & Administrative Procedures
For HB 2313

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Hearing Date: March 29, 2023 8:00 AM

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CHILDREN AT RISK

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Proposed Policy

In Fall of 2022, law enforcement reached out to Children at Risk with concerns due to the number of trafficking cases they were seeing that involved transportation of trafficking victims by rideshare app drivers, many of which involved minor victims. We propose that transportation network companies provide training to their drivers in an effort to educate their employees on the signs of trafficking. This training would be at least 15 minutes in length, approved by the attorney general, provided in both English and Spanish, and inform the driver of the signs of trafficking and how to report. This measure would prevent drivers from unknowingly participating in trafficking and encourage them to report any suspicious activity they are witnessing.

Scope of the Problem

Transportation Network Company (TNC) drivers are (likely unwittingly) helping traffickers by transporting human trafficking victims in the course of their trafficking. Law enforcement has gathered evidence of human trafficking victims (including child victims) being transported by rideshare application. Rideshare applications allow traffickers to move victims virtually anywhere without having to leave their home, making them even more difficult to catch “in the act.” For example, in Montgomery County, a man was arrested in September of 2022 for trafficking and sexual assault of a minor. He groomed that minor, and then used a rideshare app to transport her. In Dallas, a man was sentenced to over ten years for attempting to traffic who he thought was a teenage girl. He planned to transport the girl (actually an undercover officer) to his hotel room by rideshare application. These stories are but a small representation of the true number of victims that are transported by their traffickers using TNCs.

Impact

Drivers could serve as first reporters and work with police departments to provide basic intelligence and information, but they may not recognize the signs of trafficking without training.

An Uber driver in Elk Grove, California recognized the signs and reported two women who were trafficking a 16-year-old girl. Due to his quick action, police were able to recover the teenage girl from a life of trafficking. The driver provided critical information to law enforcement and prevented the young girl from additional victimization. Because the driver had some background knowledge of human trafficking and was able to recognize the signs, he helped this girl escape further abuse.

With improved training, TNC drivers will be able to better recognize the signs of human trafficking and report the trafficking they are observing. These reports would be incredibly beneficial to law enforcement in identifying victims and preventing further harm.