

'Ride-sharing' firms face onslaught of lawsuits

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A person who works under another's direction and supervision is an employee — that's been the law for many years. So Uber is also facing a class-action suit over considering its drivers independent contractors rather than employees.

On Sept. 9, the National Federation of the Blind filed a suit alleging a pattern of discrimination by Uber drivers against customers with service animals. The case cited dozens of instances from Boston to Austin and throughout California, including the Bay Area, where Uber drivers, upon meeting the blind customers awaiting the ride, canceled — on occasion charging a cancellation fee — or re-

fused to accommodate the customers' service animals, calling them "pets" and at times were verbally abusive.

James Gump, who works atighthouse for the Blind on Van Ness Avenue near City Hall and is named in the suit, told The Extra that in at least five instances since he began using the services this year and as recently as August, he said, an app driver has refused to accommodate his service dog, or to explain the refusal, except to say that they don't transport pets.

"It really jeopardized my safety and confidence in the service," Gump said, adding that despite his providing the guide dog identification card and informing the drivers of their legal duty to accommodate the dog, "they

still refused, saying they would not allow pets in the car."

In San Francisco, Uber has operated in defiance of an SFMTA cease-and-desist order issued in 2011. Uber switched its name from "UberCab," and last year won approval from the CPUC to continue operating.

For another example of tech transit's contempt for the law, take the case of SFO, where the Airport Commission has barred ride services from picking up or dropping off customers, but there's no enforcement.

Wingz, a smaller startup, specifically advertises airport service. Then there's Summon, formerly Instant Cab, which on its Website thumbs its nose at the Airport Commission's cease-

and-desist letter and says: "Still, in the innovative spirit of a start-up, we re-imagined the letter as a progress and persist notice."

In an effort to boost the taxi companies' provision of services to the disabled, the MTA's Paul Rose told The Extra, its board recently agreed to credit cabdrivers an extra \$10 per wheelchair trip if they provide at least 10 rides per month, to a maximum of \$4,167 per year and \$12,500 total toward a taxi medallion down payment. Cabbies also get a pass to the front of the line at SFO "for drivers who pick up wheelchair customers from areas outside the downtown core."

"We're working any angle we

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A MASSIVE NEW HOUSING TAX

will only make the housing crisis worse and hurt
San Francisco residents — vote no on Prop. G.

Paid for by Stop the Housing Tax, No on G, a coalition of homeowners, renters and real estate organizations. Major funding by National Association of Realtors, California Association of Realtors Issues Mobilization PAC Committee and San Francisco Association of Realtors, 425 Market Street, 26th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105, FPPC #1689949

Prop. G imposes a massive new tax on many homes, including single-family homes with in-law units, sold in San Francisco. This new tax of up to 24% of the total sales price of a home is one of the highest taxes ever levied in San Francisco or any city.¹ Worse, not one cent is obligated to go towards creating more housing — it can all be diverted to other uses.

Take a closer look at exactly who gets hurt if Prop. G becomes law:

New Homebuyers and Renters Lose: There are zero protections against passing on all the costs to new owners or new tenants.

Owners Forced to Sell Homes Lose: Owners forced to sell because they face an illness, job loss or job transfer are not protected from Prop. G.

Seniors Lose: Their retirement nest eggs could be scrambled by this massive new tax.

People Looking for Affordable Rentals Lose: Prop. G creates an incentive for homeowners to take secondary rentals, known as in-law units, off the market — leading to even higher rents.

San Franciscans deserve thoughtful solutions to address our housing crisis, not Prop. G.

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VOTE NO on PROP. G

ON NOVEMBER 4 OR WITH YOUR ABSENTEE BALLOT.

To learn more, go to: www.StoptheHousingTax.com

¹Read the full text of Prop. G on the City and County of San Francisco Board of Supervisors' website at www.sfbos.org/ftp/uploadedfiles/bdsupvrs/committees/materials/rls071014_140695.pdf