

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 12, 2023

Mr. David Risher  
Chief Executive Officer  
Lyft Inc.  
185 Berry Street, Suite 5000  
San Francisco, California 94107

Dear Mr. Risher,

We write to seek information regarding Lyft's actions to prevent its ride-hailing service from being used for trafficking. Reports from survivors indicate that ride-hailing apps are among the most used means of transportation in sex trafficking.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, reports from the Connecticut Department of Children and Families indicate that sex traffickers in Connecticut are using ride-hailing services to transport children. Moreover, reports of human trafficking have increased in recent years in many states, including Missouri and Georgia.<sup>2</sup> This causes us to question whether Lyft is doing all it can to combat human trafficking.

We recognize that Lyft has taken action to combat trafficking on its ride-hailing service. Past news coverage indicates that Lyft conducted trainings for drivers to recognize signs of trafficking, made anti-trafficking resources available to drivers, and posted about efforts to combat trafficking on the Lyft Blog.<sup>3</sup> We understand Lyft also partnered with BEST to develop driver trainings and with Polaris to provide free rides for trafficking survivors.<sup>4</sup> The driver trafficking resource page, however, no longer appears on the company's publicly accessible site.

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<sup>1</sup> Kezban Yagci Sokat, "Understanding the Role of Transportation in Human Trafficking in California," *Mineta Transportation Institute*, November 2022, <https://transweb.sjsu.edu/sites/default/files/2108-Yagci%20Sokat-Crimes-Involving-Transportation-Legislation-Stakeholders.pdf>; Brittany Anthony et al., "On-Ramps, Intersections, and Exit Routes: A Roadmap for Systems and Industries to Prevent and Disrupt Human Trafficking," *Polaris*, July 2018, <https://polarisproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/A-Roadmap-for-Systems-and-Industries-to-Prevent-and-Disrupt-Human-Trafficking-Transportation-Industry.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> "Missouri," National Human Trafficking Hotline, available at <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/statistics/missouri>; "Georgia," National Human Trafficking Hotline, available at <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/statistics/georgia>.

<sup>3</sup> "Lyft Drivers and Delta Airlines Personnel are Now Trained to Spot Human Trafficking," *Fight the New Drug*, July 3, 2020, <https://fightthenewdrug.org/lyft-drivers-and-delta-airlines-personnel-are-now-trained-to-spot-human-trafficking/>; Alexis Eglund, "Lyft sessions show drivers how to spot human trafficking signs," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, February 5, 2020, <https://www.reviewjournal.com/local/lyft-sessions-show-drivers-how-to-spot-human-trafficking-signs-1951778/>.

<sup>4</sup> "Lyft Partners with Anti-Trafficking Organizations to Educate Drivers on Human Trafficking Prevention," *Lyft Blog*, January 7, 2020, <https://www.lyft.com/blog/posts/best-and-lyft-partner-to-educate-drivers-on-human-trafficking-prevention>; "Lyft & Polaris Partner to Provide Free Rides for Victims of Human Trafficking," *Lyft Blog*, July 30, 2019, <https://www.lyft.com/blog/posts/lyft-amp-polaris-partner-to-provide-free-rides-for-victims-of-human-trafficking>.

Especially given the recent reporting that Lyft has downsized and engaged in cost-cutting measures, we are concerned that the efforts to date are insufficient to address trafficking on the company's ride-hailing service.<sup>5</sup>

Lyft has the potential to aid survivors directly: nonprofits, government entities, and healthcare providers in states like Tennessee have cited transportation options as survivors' top need.<sup>6</sup> The company can and must do more to shield everyone—both children and adults—from trafficking.

We request a written response to the following questions by no later than June 26, 2023:

1. What steps does Lyft take to combat the use of its ride-hailing service for human trafficking?
2. Is there a standardized reporting protocol for drivers who believe that a passenger may be trafficked?
3. What resources does Lyft provide to drivers (e.g., information on the National Human Trafficking Hotline) to recognize and prevent human trafficking?
  - a. Are those resources available to all drivers?
  - b. How often are those resources updated?
  - c. In what languages are those resources offered?
4. If the answer to Question 3 includes training for drivers, please also answer the following:
  - a. Is the training online, in person, or both?
    - i. If virtual, is there a verification process to ensure participation by registrants?
    - ii. Are there assessments of knowledge gained from the training (e.g., pre- or post-training surveys)?
  - b. How frequently is each type of training offered?
  - c. Is the training mandatory?
    - i. If so, how often must drivers take the training?
    - ii. If not, what percentage of drivers take the training?
  - d. Does Lyft provide incentives to encourage drivers to take the training? If not, why not?
  - e. Who developed the training curriculum?
  - f. How often is it updated?
  - g. In what languages is it offered?
  - h. Does the training vary depending on the city or region?

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<sup>5</sup> Kellen Browning, "Lyft Will Lay Off About 1,200 People as It Looks to Cut Costs," *The New York Times*, April 21, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/21/business/lyft-layoffs.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Ashleigh Chapman, Founder/CEO of Engage Together, email conversation with staff of U.S. Senator Marsha Blackburn, June 10, 2023.

5. Please describe what human trafficking resources (e.g., information on or referral to the National Human Trafficking Hotline) you currently provide or plan to provide to riders. What are Lyft's policies and practices to assist and support any riders who may be trafficked and transported via the company's ride-hailing service?
6. Please explain Lyft's process for handling reports that its ride-hailing service was used for human trafficking.
  - a. If those reports come from law enforcement, what subsequent steps does the company take?
  - b. If those reports do not come from law enforcement, does the company report the incidents to law enforcement? If not, why not?
7. Does Lyft keep records of reports that its ride-hailing service was used in sex trafficking or child sex trafficking?
  - a. If so—
    - i. Does the company keep records of which drivers provided rides to purported victims of trafficking?
    - ii. Does the company keep records of areas or addresses in which trafficking is frequently reported?
    - iii. Does the company share this information with law enforcement?
    - iv. Does the company share this information with anti-trafficking and services organizations?
  - b. If not, why not?
8. Does Lyft investigate whether drivers providing rides to alleged trafficking victims were aware of or involved in said trafficking? Does Lyft receive reports from law enforcement regarding the same?
  - a. If so, what steps do you take to ensure involved drivers are permanently prohibited from driving for Lyft?
  - b. What steps do you take to ensure involved drivers do not provide ridesharing or -hailing services on other platforms?
  - c. If a driver is being investigated, does Lyft request a suspension of that driver until the investigation is completed? If not, why not?
9. Please provide details regarding Lyft's partnership with Polaris. Does Lyft still provide rides to trafficking victims? If not, when did the program stop?
10. Please provide details regarding Lyft's partnership with BEST. If that partnership has ended, when and why did it end?
11. Please provide the number of people, and their job title(s), that Lyft employs to ensure that its ride-hailing service is not used for human trafficking. Please provide this information as of May 31 for each year from 2018 through now.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. It is imperative that anti-trafficking remains a top priority. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



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RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
United States Senate



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MARSHA BLACKBURN  
United States Senate



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JOSH HAWLEY  
United States Senate



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JON OSSOFF  
United States Senate