

October 7, 2021

Harry Bains
BC Minister of Labour

Cc: Adam Walker, BC Parliamentary Secretary for the New Economy

Amend the *Employment Standards Act* and Classify Gig Workers as Employees

Dear Minister Bains,

On October 6th, UFCW 1518 filed an unfair labour practice to the Labour Relations Board on behalf of three fired Uber drivers. UFCW 1518 wants to hold the tech corporation accountable.

Uber callously terminated the employment of Puneet Kumar, Parminder Singh Kullar, and Bhupinder Singh with no formal investigation. Parminder had over 1,000 five-star reviews and yet his account was deactivated after a complaint from a customer. He had no opportunity to tell his side of the story.

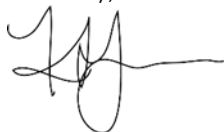
The same thing happened to Puneet and Bhupinder. These drivers deal with unsafe work conditions and face rude, demanding and insulting customers who can easily retaliate by leaving a quick negative review. The list of five-star reviews that a driver racks up goes quickly down the drain in one instance.

The heartbreaking fact is that these drivers rely on the income they earn from the Uber app to support themselves and their families. Due to their classification as contractors, gig workers are not entitled to basic employment and labour protections, allowing corporations like Uber ample opportunity to avoid abiding by the *Employment Standards Act* and treating its workers with dignity and respect.

These gig workers are working on the frontlines during this entire pandemic, and now in the fourth wave and they need the same level of protection that any other person classified as an “employee” would have. Many of the workers in the gig economy are people of colour who have been impacted disproportionately by the pandemic. They have proven themselves to be essential as they safely drive citizens from one place to the next. Not only have they had to confront unsafe work conditions, low wages, and a lack of benefits, but they also face job insecurity and unfair firings, risking the very livelihood that they have worked so hard to attain.

We are asking that you amend the *Employment Standards Act* to enable app-based contract workers like Uber drivers to join a union, classify them as employees and allow them to receive other basic protections. With the essential work that they provide serving their communities, changing the *Employment Standards Act* is the least you can do to ensure they can continue to make their living and support themselves, their families, and their communities.

Sincerely,



Kim Novak
President, UFCW 1518