

## Rape charge underscores urgency of ride-share reforms

It has been a wild and busy month for scandal-plagued Uber.

First, the city of Los Angeles pressed for state regulators to require the safety-shirking ride-share company and its brethren to better screen their drivers, a number of whom have [shocking criminal histories](#). The next day, Orange County prosecutors announced that yet another Uber driver has been charged with a horrendous crime – this time, [raping a female passenger](#).

Uber has arrogantly put profits above safety by steadfastly refusing to improve driver screening even as its drivers have carved a trail of violence and mayhem across the country. The company's background check process is a joke that's sadly being played on its unsuspecting clients.

Uber's screening process omits key criminal databases, searches others that are incomplete and does not include fingerprint scans. Its corps of drivers has included sex offenders and people with convictions for murder, kidnapping, assault, robbery and other serious crimes.

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, council President Herb Wesson and Councilman Paul Krekorian took a first step toward addressing this intolerable situation. They [wrote a letter](#) to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) calling for Uber and Lyft drivers to undergo fingerprint scans and background checks similar to the rigorous ones that taxi drivers are subjected to. Fingerprint scans are critical because they ensure that records retrieved in background checks actually match the person undergoing the check.

The urgency of their demands was tragically underscored just days later, when the Orange County District Attorney's Office charged an Uber driver with raping his intoxicated 21 year-old female passenger at an Anaheim motel. Omar Mahmoud Mousa, 52, of Anaheim, has been charged with one felony count of forcible rape and two other felony sex-related offenses, according to the Los Angeles Times. And prosecutors say they believe there may be more victims.

Fingerprint scans are a good first step and it is imperative that the CPUC act immediately to implement these critical changes. But much more must be done to even the playing field. Until ride-share drivers are held to the same high standards as limousine operators and taxis, the safety of everyone who climbs into a ride-share vehicle will continue to be a roll of the dice.