

# Uber drivers want rate hikes – but not all want a union

By [AMY RADIL \(/PEOPLE/AMY-RADIL\)](#) • JUL 29, 2016

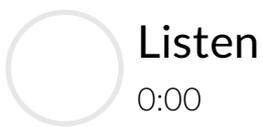
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KUOW PHOTO/BOND HUBERMAN

Chris P. works full-time for Uber in Seattle, including long shifts on the weekends. The rest of the week, he's a stay-at-home dad. He likes the job, but he hopes a union could get him more stability.



Chris: “If we have a union and we have a collective bargaining, we can get higher rates, tips, we have better job security, this will become a respectable position and not so much a disposable one.”

The Seattle City Council has voted (<http://kuow.org/post/seattle-first-city-let-uber-drivers-unionize>) to offer union representation to drivers for Uber and Lyft. On Wednesday, Aug. 3, they’ll hear from city officials on how that process is going.

The ordinance affecting all for-hire drivers is scheduled to take effect in September.

Chris says drivers feel disposable because if they get a bad customer rating, the consequences are huge. Chris asked to use just his middle name because he fears retaliation from Uber. He says he doesn’t see an effective way to advocate for changes within the company.

Chris: “Uber – no matter what I say to them or how many e-mails I send them, they’re never going to listen to a driver. They’re just not.”

Chris attended a recent workshop held by Seattle officials to get driver input on how the vote for union representation should work.

He says they have the right idea, but he’s still worried about the implementation. Tami Dunlap was also at those meetings.

Dunlap: “I’m a full-time special education teacher and back in December of 2014, I was looking for a way to make some extra money. And so I was considering a second job, and somebody suggested that I look into Uber.”

She’s been driving part-time for Uber since then. But Dunlap is worried that part-time drivers may not be deemed eligible to vote on union representation. And she wants the chance to vote “no.”

Dunlap: “The reason I like Uber so much is it’s under my control. And the idea that some third party was going to come in and have some sort of say about when I drive or where I drive or how much I drive just has absolutely no appeal for me.”

That’s not to say Dunlap has no issues with Uber. She says many drivers believe the base fare is too low – a recent trip netted her just \$2.85.

And she agrees drivers do need more support from Uber when they get the occasional low rating.

But instead of a union, she wants to address issues directly with the company.

Seattle's attempt to bring unions to workers in the gig economy has generated nationwide attention. This Wednesday city officials will brief the council on next steps in the process.

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