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Uber says it is not subject to California gig-worker law

Uber pushed back on Wednesday against a newly passed California bill that effectively requires companies to reclassify their contract workers as employees, in a sign of the emerging resistance that the measure is prompting across the gig economy.

Tony West, Uber's chief legal officer, said in a news conference that the ride-hailing company would not treat its drivers, who are independent contractors, as employees under the California bill. He said that drivers were not a core part of Uber's business and could maintain their independent status when the measure goes into effect as state law on Jan. 1. Uber's business, Mr. West said, is not providing rides but "serving as a technology platform for several different types of digital marketplaces." He added that the company was "no stranger to legal battles."

The move follows the California Legislature's formal passage of the bill, called Assembly Bill 5, earlier on Wednesday. The measure requires companies to treat workers as employees and not contractors if they exert control over how workers perform their tasks or if their work is part of an employer's regular business. California's governor, Gavin Newsom, has endorsed the bill and is expected to sign it. The bill has implications for app-based services such as Uber, Lyft and DoorDash, which have built themselves into large businesses with independent and inexpensive workers who do not receive the benefits or minimum pay guaranteed to employees.

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