
Uber hires ex-U.S. Attorney General Holder to probe sexual harassment

2017/02/21 15:47 στην κατηγορία INTERNATIONAL

Uber Technologies Inc has hired former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder to conduct a review of sexual harassment claims at the ride-hailing service made by a former employee.

Holder and Tammy Albarran, who are partners at the law firm Covington & Burling, will look into the complaints about a manager at Uber, as well as general questions about diversity and inclusion, Chief Executive Travis Kalanick told his employees in a memo on Monday that was seen by Reuters.

Last year, Airbnb hired Holder, who served under former President Barack Obama, to help craft a policy to combat discrimination occurring through the online lodging service's platform.

Arianna Huffington, who joined Uber's board last year, Liane Hornsey, Uber's chief human resources officer, and Angela Padilla, the company's associate general counsel, will also help conduct the review, Kalanick said in the memo.

Huffington, Kalanick and Hornsey will meet on Tuesday, the memo said.

Susan Fowler, the former Uber employee who complained of being the target of sexual harassment by her manager, wrote in a blog post on Sunday that when she reported the offense to human resources officials and management, they declined to punish the alleged offender because he "was a high performer" and that this was his first offense."

Fowler also said, after speaking with other female employees, she realized that both HR and management had been lying about this being the manager's "first offense."

In a statement sent to Reuters on Sunday, Kalanick called Fowler's allegations "abhorrent and against everything Uber stands for and believes in."

Fowler's tale prompted a backlash, including calls for a revival of the #DeleteUber movement. Some protesters urged a boycott of the ride service over allegations it sought to profit from the chaos at New York's John F. Kennedy Airport last month, after President Donald Trump's executive order barring entry to people from seven

Muslim majority countries.

Many women working in Silicon Valley, particularly in highly technical roles, say they have experienced misogyny and harassment in the male-dominated field. Technology companies are under mounting pressure to make their workforces more diverse by hiring more women, blacks and Latinos – but progress has been slow.

“There have been many questions about the gender diversity of Uber’s technology teams,” Kalanick said. Uber will publish a broader diversity report for the company in the coming months, he said.

“I believe in creating a workplace where a deep sense of justice underpins everything we do,” Kalanick said. “Every Uber employee should be proud of the culture we have and what we will build together over time.”

(By Subrat Patnaik, Reuters)