

QUARTZ

PASSING JUDGEMENT

The biggest legal threat to Uber's business just got a whole lot bigger

WRITTEN BY | [Alison Griswold](#) | December 09, 2015

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The suit challenges whether Uber drivers are independent contractors, as the company claims, or employees, which would entitle them to a host of benefits such as health insurance and require Uber to pay on-the-job expenses like gas and maintenance that drivers currently pay themselves.

The case was [certified as a class action](#) by a federal judge at the start of September and is headed to trial in June 2016. But on Wednesday (Dec. 9), U.S. District Court Judge Edward Chen dramatically expanded the scope of that class-action.

When Chen first granted class certification to the plaintiffs, he limited it on several counts — most notably it excluded drivers who had failed to opt out of an arbitration clause in their Uber contracts. That the case got class certification at all was a blow to Uber, but the company tried to paint it as a win, noting that the fine print on Chen's ruling meant it would "certify only a tiny fraction of the class that the plaintiffs were seeking."

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