Former Uber CEO Travis Kalanick Fights Back against Benchmark Lawsuit

Summary: A venture capital firm is suing to remove Travis Kalanick from the board of Uber.

It's a tough time for Travis Kalanick. The founder of Uber was ousted as CEO from his own company in June, and last week, a venture capital firm sued to remove him from the company's board, where he still has a seat.

Kalanick has already responded to the lawsuit, calling it a "public and personal attack."

Reuters reported that Kalanick filed his response to Benchmark Capital's lawsuit on Thursday. Last week, the venture capital firm filed a lawsuit requesting that Kalanick rescind his Uber seat and power. The company said that it owns 13% of Uber and has 20% voting power on the board.

At the heart of Benchmark's lawsuit is that the board structure was expanded in 2016 to add three new voting directors, which Kalanick has the power to hire. Benchmark said that Kalanick had hid numerous indiscretions in order to be granted those three seats.

The alleged misdeeds include trade-secret theft of automated driving cars and Kalanick's mishandling of rape committed by drivers in India. Benchmark said that Kalanick had defrauded them and wants him to give up control of those seats.

In his legal response, Kalanick said that Benchmark is scheming to oust him from the company he co-founded and to take away power that is rightfully his. He also said that the Benchmark's requests should be arbitrated and not fought in court.

Kalanick said that all of the allegations against him were already disclosed when he was granted the three seats.

“Benchmark never suggested that the amendments were ‘fraudulently induced’ or in any way unenforceable, although all of the events on which it bases its claim of fraud were well known to Benchmark,” Kalanick’s filing stated. “Its position was explicitly to the contrary.”

According to *Reuters,* Benchmark's move is a "rare instance" and has created a divide amongst the venture capital community. However, Benchmark has never been shy about its disdain for Kalanick. In June, it and a group of investors demanded Kalanick's resignation as head of Uber.

Kalanick's lawsuit said that Benchmark had threatened him in June to resign, stating that if he didn't sign a document immediately that the investors would launch a public smear campaign against him.

Benchmark invested $11 million in Uber in 2011, and now its stake is reportedly worth $9 billion.

"Resorting to litigation was an extremely difficult step for Benchmark," Benchmark said in a statement. "Failing to act now would mean endorsing behavior that is utterly unacceptable in any company, let alone a company of Uber's size and importance."

Before Kalanick's resignation, Uber was plagued with lawsuits regarding impropriety, and Kalanick had been videotaped berating an Uber driver who complained to him about the bad pay.

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Photo courtesy of *Time*

What do you think of Travis Kalanick? Let us know in the comments below.