

Financial Daily Dose 11.15.2019 | Top Story: New Jersey Targets Uber Over “Independent Contractor” Worker Classification

Sending a shot across the bow of the gig economy, New Jersey is seeking nearly \$650 million from Uber for “years of unpaid employment taxes for its drivers, arguing that the ride-hailing company has misclassified the workers as independent contractors and not as employees.” Uber says it’s challenging the state’s findings, but Jersey’s not alone in pushing back against start-ups looking to take advantage of the “independent contractor” classification – NYTimes and MarketWatch

Amazon’s not throwing in the towel yet on the DOD’s recent \$10 billion JEDI contract award to cloud competitor Microsoft. Bezos & Co. are asking for an investigation to determine whether “political bias helped Microsoft win the bid” – NYTimes and WSJ and MarketWatch

Mercedes-Benz parent Daimler AG announced plans to reduce labor cost by more than a billion over the next 3 years and warned that those efforts “and efforts to meet stricter emission targets would dent profits for the next two years” – WSJ

Owner of classic American gun brand Smith & Wesson, American Outdoor Brands, announced this week that it would split into two companies, spinning off its gun business amidst “growing pressure from the public and investors to curb violence after mass shootings” – NYTimes

We’ve been talking a lot this week about Google’s forceful move into the health sector thanks to its data partnership with Ascension. Apple inserted itself into people’s health in a different way—through its devices and app—and it’s partnering with Harvard and health organizations to use the massive amounts of personal health data it’s collecting to help “reshap[e] medical research” – NYTimes

Our allies’ perspective on the past three years of the White House’s foreign-policy-via-tariffs, and what they’re doing about it – NYTimes

China’s venture-capital boom is no more, according to the Journal, which reports that VC fundraising there is “on pace to touch its lowest level since 2013” a year after “an abrupt turn in investor confidence in the growth and profit potential of Chinese tech startups” – WSJ

Shareholders have voted to approve a deal between Gannett and Gate-House Media that would give the two largest newspaper owners in the country a common owner, with “more than 550 newspapers, 300 of them weeklies” under its direction – NYTimes

Wells Fargo’s general counsel (and former interim CEO) C. Allen Parker is heading out the door as of March 2020, the first major departure from the trouble-plagued bank since Charles Sharf took over as permanent CEO – WSJ and Law360

The USMCA—or Nafta Redux—is not dead, though you’d be forgiven for thinking otherwise. House Speaker Pelosi confirmed yesterday that the House is working with the White House on the broad strokes of a deal to accept the trade pact – WSJ

A bit of timely advice for shoppers heading into the holiday buying season for keeping those finances in check while spreading material joy to those around you – NYTimes

Have a great weekend,
MDR