



TECHNET
THE VOICE OF THE
INNOVATION ECONOMY

TechNet Northeast | Telephone 774.230.6685
One Beacon Street, Suite 16300, Boston, MA 021081
www.technet.org | @TechNetNE

February 18, 2021

The Honorable Robyn Porter
The Honorable Julie Kushner
Joint Committee on Labor and Public Employees
3800 Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Re: HB 6343 – Regarding the Gig Economy

Dear Chair Porter, Chair Kushner, and members of the Committee:

TechNet respectfully submits these comments in opposition to HB 6343, which seeks to reclassify the independent workers in the on-demand economy as employees.

TechNet is the national, bipartisan network of technology CEOs and senior executives that promotes the growth of the innovation economy by advocating a targeted policy agenda at the federal and 50-state level. Our diverse membership includes dynamic American businesses ranging from startups to the most iconic companies on the planet and represents over three million employees and countless customers in the fields of information technology, e-commerce, the sharing and gig economies, advanced energy, cybersecurity, venture capital, and finance.

Technology makes it easier for people to work independently, run their own business, and leverage their time and talents to generate supplemental income. The gig and sharing economies have provided low-barrier entry earning potential for millions of Americans. Many in this modern, diverse, independent workforce find they get better financial returns on their skills than their peers in the traditional workforce, and the freedom to work how and when they want is a crucial benefit. Now, perhaps more than ever, policymakers should be wary of restricting or eliminating the ability of technology platforms to make independent, flexible earning opportunities available to all Connecticut residents.

TechNet believes that providing worker benefits should not be the sole provenance of an employer who has control over when, where, and how work gets done; nor should the growing, dynamic, independent workforce be denied protections and benefits because they do not fit a narrow, often outdated definition of employment. When it comes to platform and app-based work, the problem is not that workers are incorrectly classified. The problem is that the statute presumes that there are only two classes of work. Attempting to shoehorn a dynamic, ever-changing, and growing industry and its workforce into binary and inflexible definitions of employer and employee via legislation will not address the underlying issue that the way many people choose to apply their skills and earn a living has changed dramatically since many of these statutes were put in place.

TechNet supports policies that maintain the independence that these workers desire with the protections that they deserve. Connecticut can design a system of benefits that is portable, flexible, and makes sense in a 21st century economy; one that recognizes the diversity of the independent workforce and the different business models of the platforms that support them. TechNet's members stand by to assist in this effort.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any additional information or assistance.

Sincerely,



Christopher Gilrein
Executive Director, Massachusetts and the Northeast
TechNet
cgilrein@technet.org