



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 – AN ACT ENSURING FAIR EMPLOYEE PROTECTIONS FOR GIG WORKERS

Dear Chairpersons:

Internet Association (IA) is the unified voice of the internet economy, representing the interests of leading Internet companies and their global community of users. It is dedicated to advancing public policy solutions that foster innovation, promote economic growth, and empower people through the free and open Internet.

IA respectfully opposes **HB 6343** that would fundamentally change how internet companies that provide needed economic opportunities to residents and business struggling to survive in a pandemic operate in Connecticut. Moreover, this proposal would cause significant economic hardship for numerous businesses already struggling to maintain a workforce and continue operating during the COVID emergency.

IA members are committed to using technology and innovation to spur local economies, provide needed food, supplies, and transportation for essential workers and other residents, and ensure the safety of those on the front lines. However, we have significant concerns with **HB 6343's** attempts to reclassify a workforce that overwhelmingly prefers to remain independent contractors. As the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated, schedule flexibility and the ability to work across multiple platforms has enabled many residents of Connecticut to supplement their incomes as traditional employment remains a challenge or more people are forced to work from home.

This legislation specifically seeks to reclassify workers in the so-called gig economy. Forcing food delivery network companies (DNCs) and transportation network companies (TNCs) to reclassify contractors as employees would dramatically curtail the services offered by internet platforms, which would make food ordering, delivery, and ridesharing more expensive and less frequent. This in turn would significantly reduce demand and limit restaurant revenues and earning opportunities for thousands of current and potential delivery workers and TNC operators. Additionally, at a time where unemployment rates are at unprecedented levels, DNCs and TNCs provide individuals a low barrier of entry for the opportunity to earn income.



IA and its members remain committed to resolving the issue of worker classification and providing increased benefits to all workers. In response to COVID-19, our member companies have made financial assistance, telehealth, and other support available to workers impacted by COVID-19. We welcome the opportunity to work with the committee and the Connecticut Legislature to enact a comprehensive statewide approach to providing protections for workers while allowing the continued flexibility and independence on-demand work affords residents of this state.

For these reasons and more, IA is opposed to **HB 6343** and urges the committee not to advance this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Olsen', written over a white background.

John Olsen
Director, State Government Affairs Northeast Region

Cc: Members of the Joint Committee on Labor and Public Employees