



**Opposition to HB 6343 - An Act Ensuring Fair Employee Protections For Gig Workers  
DoorDash - David London, Government Relations**

Good morning Senator Kushner, Representative Porter, Senator Sampson, Representative Arora and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is David London and I am Head of Government Relations, U.S. East at DoorDash a third party that many restaurants throughout Connecticut choose to partner with to offer online ordering, takeout, and delivery. We offer the following comments in respectful opposition to House Bill 6343, "An Act Ensuring Fair Employee Protections For Gig Workers".

As cities and states have issued guidance restricting the operations of restaurants and other businesses during the pandemic, delivery and pickup services have become critical to reducing person-to-person contact while ensuring that residents have access to food and the other essentials they need.

Here in Connecticut, during the early stages of the pandemic, we partnered with the Salvation Army and United Way and expanded the delivery of food boxes to communities, including Bridgeport, Torrington, and Waterbury. The program began in September of 2020 and allows people in need of food to call United Way's 2-1-1 number, who in turn coordinate with the local Salvation Army pantries to prepare food boxes that we at DoorDash pick up and deliver to the individuals in need. This program was piloted right here in Connecticut and has provided food for hundreds of families throughout the pandemic and we have begun implementation similar to this pilot in other jurisdictions based on this model.

Additionally last fall, as part of our response to the pandemic and commitment to the communities we serve, we rolled out a winterization grant program in six cities that provided \$2 million in grants to restaurants to help prepare them for the winter. We are extremely happy to announce that we recently dedicated another \$8 million in aid in 20 new cities across the country. Here in Connecticut, we donated \$500,000 to the Connecticut Restaurant Association's Relief Fund as part of a new partnership. The contribution is part of our \$200 million, 5-year Main Street Strong Pledge, which includes

a \$10 million grant program to help restaurants in select cities across the United States and Canada.

Regarding our courier partners, it is important to note that most Connecticut couriers (Dashers) spend only 5 hours a week working on our platform. We recognize that the ability to earn any income, particularly at this time, is important to these parents, retirees, students, and other Americans from all walks of life. Addressing safety and providing our Dashers who have been directly impacted by COVID-19 are among our top priorities. To date, we have taken the following steps to assist our Dashers through this trying time:

- First, we changed the default delivery method to a no-contact option to minimize personal contact between Dashers and customers.
- Provided Dashers access to personal safety equipment, including free hand sanitizer, gloves, and masks.
- Provided financial assistance to eligible Dashers who are diagnosed with COVID-19 or advised to quarantine by a medical or public health professional.
- And, to protect the health and welfare of Dashers and reduce barriers to accessing financial assistance, we have partnered with Doctor On Demand, one of the nation's leading healthcare platforms. All U.S.-based Dashers are able to take an online risk assessment for COVID-19, and eligible couriers can access a virtual urgent care visit for just \$4.

Unfortunately, HB 6343 would significantly alter the flexibility our Dashers need in order to serve their communities. Attempting to reclassify gig workers as employees is not the solution. As independent contractors, Dashers and other gig workers in Connecticut currently enjoy the flexibility to easily earn supplemental income by working a handful of hours whenever and wherever they want, in a way that accommodates their existing work, family, school, and other obligations. Overall, more than 80% of Dashers say that flexibility to decide when to work and what jobs to take is extremely important to them.

This is also not the time to make sweeping changes to a type of work so many have turned to in order to supplement their earnings during the pandemic. We respectfully suggest that upending the system many in Connecticut are relying on to bridge gaps would not be a wise move in such uncertain times.

We urge the committee against taking action on any statutory change that could reclassify gig workers as employees and foreclose on "third way" policies that preserve flexibility while providing workers with additional protections and benefits. Rather, we would like to work with the committee and your colleagues within the General Assembly to craft a regulatory regime that does not require gig workers to choose between their independence to set their own schedules and certain benefits and protections.

Platforms like DoorDash serve as a vital source of supplemental income for millions of workers across the country who choose gig economy work because of the flexibility and independence it provides. The Dashers who use our platform are stay at home parents, students, retirees, small businesses owners, and others who need supplemental income from time to time. They choose to “Dash” because the platform allows them to work when, where, and how they want.

Restricting the way third party companies like DoorDash operate within the state will only hurt residents that choose opportunities that provide flexible, on-demand work that they can engage in on their own schedule.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony before the committee and we welcome the opportunity to work with the committee moving forward.