

Testimony by Representative Stephanie Thomas
HB 6343 - An Act Ensuring Fair Employee Protections for Gig Workers
February 18, 2021

Dear Representative Porter, Senator Kushner and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee, I am writing regarding HB 6343, An Act Ensuring Fair Employee Protections for Gig Workers.

As the bill recognizes, policy has not yet caught up to the trends of the modern workplace. The share of workers engaged in non-traditional full-time employment has been changing over the past decade. Economists have stated that these alternative work arrangements have increased almost 50 percent during this period.

Many of these so-called “gig” workers have stable earnings over long periods of times, yet they lack the protections offered to full-time traditional workers. As we learned in 2020, this pool of workers would have been left high and dry if not for federal intervention which allowed them to receive Unemployment Insurance (UI).

Given the changing landscape of the workplace, several states are exploring ways to allow gig workers to pay into the UI program so that they may participate in this program when the need arises. The scope of HB 6343 has the opportunity to be expanded to request that the state explore the possibility of expanding our UI program to include gig workers with a long term, stable earnings history. This would go a long way towards protecting these key workers in our economy and leading the way in the nation on this subject.