

The Honorable Marty Walsh  
United States Secretary of Labor  
Office of the Secretary  
S-2521  
200 Constitution Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20210

The Honorable Jessica Looman  
Acting Administrator, Wage and Hour Division  
200 Constitution Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20210

June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022

Dear Secretary Walsh and Acting Administrator Looman,

In response to the Department of Labor's (DOL) recently announced [plans](#) to engage in rulemaking on employment status determination under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), we write to express our support for retaining the January 7, 2021 DOL [rule](#) on this matter and ask you to prioritize policies that advance self-employment opportunities in America without unwarranted government barriers.

Independent contracting and other flexible work policies are essential to the lifestyles and success of a growing community of over [59 million freelance workers in a broad range of occupations](#). In fact, flexibility is increasingly sought by people in more traditional work arrangements, as well. Recent surveys show that workers desire [increased flexibility](#) to [work remotely](#), control their work hours, and pursue [self-employment](#) — not only in response to pandemic disruptions but because families have shifting needs, demands, schedules, and priorities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Further, consider that [1 in 5](#) American workers have changed careers since the pandemic began, nearly [50 percent](#) are considering a career change, and [more than half](#) of American workers that changed jobs in the past year entered new occupations or fields. Clearly this is an era where flexibility, including self-employment opportunities, are of tremendous importance to families, businesses, and consumers as they battle inflation, labor shortages, and supply chain disruptions, and seek additional work options despite more than [11 million](#) job openings.

As you may be aware, an overwhelming majority of those who earn income as independent contractors are satisfied with those arrangements. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) found in a [survey](#) that 79 percent of independent contractors prefer their situation over traditional jobs and that fewer than 1 in 10 would prefer a traditional work arrangement.

Simply put, while it may benefit narrow special interest groups, rulemaking that diminishes freelance opportunities and turns independent contractors into traditional employees under federal law would be widely unpopular among the individuals it would impact most directly.

As we await announcement of a proposed rule from the U.S. Wage and Hour Division, we are concerned about the intent of DOL based on continued [attempts](#) to overturn the January 7, 2021 rule that remains in effect; continued references to [worker misclassification](#) as a means to undermine independent contracting; continued [prioritization](#) of the Protecting the Right to Organize Act by President Biden that would institute the unworkable “ABC” test for employment status under the National Labor Relations Act; and past actions such as the 2015 Obama/Biden Administration [guidance](#) that elevated the use of secondary economic realities test

factors to curb independent contracting – an approach we worry President Biden may pursue again.

The January 7, 2021 DOL rule has provided clarity to the decades-old economic realities test for the modern workforce, helping to apply determinations in light of the different types of work and technologies used to work and connect with customers today. Instead of removing this clear and sensible standard and attempting to diminish or eliminate independent contracting, we urge you to preserve paths to self-employment that allow tens of millions of working Americans, parents of children with special needs, workers seeking career changes, disabled workers and workers caring for disabled family members, and entrepreneurs growing small businesses of their own to pursue work on their own terms.

During your June 24 and June 29, 2022 forums, numerous independent contractors and others made clear their strong support for self-employment and the many ways independent contracting has enriched their lives. We ask that DOL not only work to protect but further improve rather than diminish these career pathways.

DOL could do so by, among other things, supporting legislation to end government-imposed barriers to businesses voluntarily providing benefits to independent contractors and providing self-employed workers more parity with other employers in acquiring health care and other benefits on their own, such as permitting voluntary access to portable benefits/health savings accounts.

At a time when American families are increasingly concerned about the economy and their careers, now is a time to advance the flexibility they seek. Reducing paths to self-employment will only reduce opportunity and growth in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Sincerely,

**Brent Wm. Gardner**  
Chief Government Affairs Officer  
Americans for Prosperity

**F. Vincent Vernuccio**  
President  
Institute for the American Worker

**Michael J. Lotito**  
Co-Chair  
Littler Workplace Policy Institute

**Krisztina Pusok, Ph. D.**  
Director of Policy and Research  
The American Consumer Institute

**Brandon Arnold**  
Executive Vice President  
National Taxpayers Union

**Grover Norquist**  
President  
Americans for Tax Reform

**Greg Sindelar**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Texas Public Policy Foundation  
and  
Chief Executive Officer  
Alliance for Opportunity

**Lisa B. Nelson**  
Chief Executive Officer  
American Legislative Exchange Council

**Andrew F. Quinlan**  
President  
Center for Freedom and Prosperity

**Robert Fellner**  
Vice President & Policy Director  
Nevada Policy Research Institute

**Heather R. Higgins**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Independent Women's Voice

**Bethany Marcum**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Alaska Policy Forum

**Mike Stenhouse**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Rhode Island Center for Freedom and Prosperity

**Mike Hruby**  
President  
New Jobs America

**Paul Gessing**  
President  
Rio Grande Foundation

**Seton Motley**  
President  
Less Government

**Robert Alt**  
President & CEO  
The Buckeye Institute

**Steve Delie**  
Director, Policy and Legal Affairs  
Workers for Opportunity

**Brian Minnich**  
Executive Vice President  
Freedom Foundation

**Daniel Erspamer**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Pelican Institute  
and  
Chief Executive Officer  
Alliance for Opportunity

**Eric Peterson**  
Director  
Pelican Center for Technology and Innovation

**Randy Hicks**  
President & CEO  
Georgia Center for Opportunity  
and  
President & CEO  
Alliance for Opportunity

**Jeffrey Mazzella**  
President  
Center for Individual Freedom

**Douglas Carswell**  
President & CEO  
Mississippi Center for Public Policy

**David Williams**  
President  
Taxpayers Protection Alliance

**Ryan Ellis**  
President  
Center for a Free Economy

**Phil Kerpen**  
President  
American Commitment

**James Taylor**  
President  
The Heartland Institute

**Adam Brandon**

President  
FreedomWorks

**Elaine Parker**

President  
Job Creators Network Foundation

**Tarren Bragdon**

President & CEO  
Foundation for Government Accountability

**Brandon Dutcher**

Senior Vice President  
Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs

**Thomas A. Schatz**

President  
Citizens Against Government Waste

**Justin Owen**

President & CEO  
Beacon Center of Tennessee

**Matthew Kandrach**

President  
Consumer Action for a Strong Economy

**Charles Mitchell**

Chief Executive Officer  
Commonwealth Foundation

**Caden Rosenbaum**

Policy Analyst, Tech and Innovation  
Libertas Institute

**James L. Martin**

Founder/Chairman  
60 Plus Association

**Saulius “Saul” Anuzis**

President  
60 Plus Association