

Opening Statement of Vice Ranking Member Greg Casar (TX-35)

Workforce Protections Subcommittee Hearing

"Empowering the Modern Worker"

2175 Rayburn House Office Building

Thursday, May 20, 2025 | 10:15 am

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

The nation's labor laws establish basic worker protections, like a decent wage, reasonable hours, a safe workplace, the right to organize, and the right to collectively bargain, the right to overtime.

But ever since workers won these protections at the federal level, big corporations have lobbied for loopholes. And those big corporations always try to sell those loopholes as "good for the workers, too."

And that's exactly what we're dealing with here today. Huge, profitable corporations want to create more loopholes through Congress in our labor laws to pretend their own employees are "independent contractors." We should all be supportive of real, legitimate, independent contractors and supportive of America's small businesses, while also noting that the Department of Labor (DOL) has found that millions of American workers today are illegally misclassified as contractors when they really are employees. When that happens to them, they are stripped of their right to overtime, minimum wage, and other basic protections.

According to a 2025 [study](#) from the Economic Policy Institute, misclassification costs your average American custodial workers more than \$10,000 a year, while our truck drivers are deprived of more than \$21,000 a year when their employers misclassify them as contractors. Additionally, misclassifying workers as independent contractors costs the American taxpayer. Big corporations are skipping out on paying into Social Security, Medicare, and Workers' Compensation.

Some may claim that this is in favor of "innovation" or "flexibility." But let's be clear – this is just good old-fashioned corporate tax dodging and union busting.

The first Trump Administration tried to make it easier for corporations to underpay workers and cheat taxpayers in this way. As Trump left office in January of 2021, his top officials pushed forward a rule to change the legal test about whether workers are employees or independent contractors, therefore getting a lot of employers around the protections that workers have for minimum wage and overtime.

The Economic Policy Institute [estimated](#) that the 2021 Trump rule robbed workers of at least \$3.7 billion every year in pay and benefits. The Biden Administration didn't do anything radical. They just reversed us back to the rules that had been working for over 80 years. And so, what did Trump do this time, after winning a second time? He's getting rid of that Biden rule, which ultimately is *actually* what the American rule has been for nearly a century, and again is making it so big corporations, especially big tech, can get around paying their workers what it is they deserve. That is, coincidentally, right after Uber's CEO donated a million dollars to Trump's inauguration fund.

You're going to hear in today's hearing from House Republicans about how companies like Uber and DoorDash want to provide so-called "portable benefits". We all want big companies like Uber to provide people benefits, but what we're *actually* talking about here today, is that those multi-billion-dollar companies want to create loopholes where if they offer some of those benefits, they can get around giving workers the right to a union — a right established nearly 100 years ago. They want to get around the rules that require that workers be paid a minimum wage and the right to overtime.

In my view, Congress should put the American worker ahead of this kind of corporate lobbying.

And here's the hypocrisy in all of this: this week, the Republican budget plan aims to take healthcare away from over 13 million American workers.

In today's hearing, Republicans have said they are supposedly hosting this so workers can get portable benefits. Well, if Republicans vote for this budget bill, millions of these gig workers will lose their healthcare. One of the most important earned benefits they already have is Medicaid, which they can take from employer to employer. If my Republican colleagues really care about making sure people have benefits and health care, then they would vote no, just like the Democrats are voting no, on this bill to destroy Medicaid as we know it.

Join us, Mr. Chairman, in rejecting this bill that is up this week, which would take health care and benefits away from millions of your constituents and mine. I yield back.