

**Ranking Member Mark Takano**  
**Workforce Protections Subcommittee Hearing on**  
**Federal Wage and Hour Policies in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Economy**  
**February 16, 2017**  
**10 a.m.**

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Thank you, Chairman Byrne. I look forward to working with you to address the challenges facing American workers. It is my hope that the work we do together in this subcommittee will ensure that the rules of our economy help American workers and businesses prosper together.

Today's hearing is on wage and hour policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace. In the past three Congresses, the Majority has called eight hearing on wage and hour policies—but in those hearings we have not considered a single policy to raise the pay for millions of hardworking Americans who are struggling to make ends meet.

If past is prologue, I expect we are going to hear from our friends in the Majority today that the Fair Labor Standards Act is stifling America's job creators.

But before we launch into that discussion, I'd like to take a moment to step back and look at the facts. Over the past four decades worker productivity has grown by more than 70 percent.

You might think a rising tide would lift all boats, but that hasn't happened. Since 1979, wages for the top 1 percent have grown

by 138 percent, while wages for the bottom 90 percent have grown by only 15 percent.

Workers are more productive than ever, but it's been a long time since most Americans have gotten a raise.

So tell me, who is being stifled?

I wholeheartedly agree with the title of this hearing – we need to update wage and hour policy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. That should mean strengthening our wage and hour policies to ensure that hardworking Americans get a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.

Too many Americans today can't afford to buy a home, send their children to college, or save for retirement. It should not be this way. American workers' productivity has led to tremendous economic growth. But unfortunately, the rules are written so that the economy delivers only for those at the very top. Here in Congress, we have the power – and a responsibility – to fix that.

However, despite our requests, last Congress, the Majority did not hold a single hearing on what we can do to ensure that Americans in the middle and the bottom rungs of the economic ladder get a fair shake.

They refused to raise the minimum wage and fought against the update to the overtime threshold – which would have put more pay into the pockets of millions of hardworking Americans. And the Majority refused to bring the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace in line with the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce by adopting sensible solutions to provide predictable schedules, paid sick days and paid family leave, and finally guarantee equal pay for equal work, which are long overdue.

These are the updates to our wage and hour policy that would make a real difference to hardworking Americans.

There is simply no need to make the false choice between employer innovation and rules that make our economy fair for everyone. We can have both. There are plenty of examples of businesses that do very well while playing by the rules. In fact, treating workers fairly has been shown again and again to promote employee retention and productivity.

I hope our witnesses today will help us explore a future of work that is both innovative and fairly rewards all hardworking Americans.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back the remainder of my time.