



Testimony of  
Sharon I. Block  
Labor and Worklife Program, Harvard Law School

Hearing Before the  
United States Congress  
House Education and the Workforce Committee:

*The Sharing Economy: Creating Opportunities for Innovation and Flexibility*

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**Sharon I. Block, Executive Director  
Labor & Worklife Program, Harvard Law School  
8 Mount Auburn Street  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138  
(617) 495-9265  
[sblock@law.harvard.edu](mailto:sblock@law.harvard.edu)**

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Chair Foxx, Ranking Member Scott, and members of the Committee: thank you for this opportunity to testify today on the important subject of the “sharing economy” and its impacts on people who earn income from it, the workforce, and the broader economy.

My name is Sharon Block, and I am the Executive Director of the Labor & Worklife Program at Harvard Law School, which is Harvard University’s center for research, teaching and creative problem solving related to the world of work and its implications for society, as well as home of the Harvard Trade Union Program, the oldest executive leadership program at Harvard. The views expressed in my testimony are my own and do not represent the views of Harvard Law School.

Before I start, I would like to make a note about vocabulary, which I find challenging in the context of talking about what the Committee has labeled “the sharing economy.” In addition to “sharing economy,” it is often referred to as the “gig economy,” the “on-demand economy” or the “online platform economy”. I prefer the “online platform economy” because I find it the most descriptive and value neutral. It also can be difficult to arrive at agreed terms for labeling people who derive income from the online platform economy without betraying an opinion as to the answer to one of the questions that we are here today to discuss: whether or not those individuals are employees or independent contractors. To foster a spirit of open dialogue on the question, I prefer to use a term that does not convey a bias as to the answer to that question and so have adopted the convention of labeling those individuals “workers” – even in the absence of agreement on whether they are employees or independent contractors, surely we agree that they work for a living and differ only on whether they work for another company or for themselves.

I would imagine that everyone in this hearing room has used the services of an online platform at some point and most probably use them regularly. I know that I do. We value the ease that they bring to our lives in procuring goods and services with just the click of a button or a touch of a finger. As with many technologic innovations, the digital platform creates new opportunities for its consumers. The ability to order food, call for car service or sell our unwanted stuff without interacting with a person allows us to forget sometimes that there are real people behind these platforms --- often they’re our neighbors or even family members, and indeed, the terms under which they’re working makes a difference in the standards of living of many American families. I appreciate the Committee’s interest in exploring the standard of living for those workers and how our labor and employment laws do and should apply to work in this sector.

The key question that this hearing is designed to address is whether the innovation and flexibility that marks the online platform economy is consistent with our historical structure of labor and

employment laws that we enacted to ensure a basic level of economic security for American workers. Judge Vince Chhabria<sup>1</sup>, in a case brought by Lyft drivers asserting that they were employees misclassified as independent contractors, described the dilemma this way: “The jury . . . will be handed a square peg and asked to choose between two round holes.” In an address this spring to the Consumer Technology Association’s New American Jobs Summit, Chair Foxx similarly adopted the square peg/round hole analogy and concluded that, “self-employed individuals who rely on the sharing economy for work don’t fit neatly into obsolete job categories defined in another era.”<sup>2</sup>

I believe that the square peg/round hole analogy sells short the framers of our basic labor and employment laws. They handed down to us statutes that did not define their scope in reference to the particulars of the jobs that were familiar to them at the time, but rather in accordance with the timeless principle that the norm for workers in our nation should be the ability to earn a fair wage, be safe on the job, save for retirement and avoid destitution during periods of unemployment. Although there are always new challenges arising from technologic and business innovation, I see nothing inconsistent between that principle and the dynamism that has always marked the American economy. Employers have found ways to innovate their way through many phases of the American economy from the recovery from the Great Depression through to the information age within the confines of this principle.

The Digital Age of the American economy need not be any different. Online platform companies have a choice: they can be innovative and flexible while creating good jobs or while destroying good jobs. My testimony will focus on demonstrating that there is nothing inherent in their drive for innovation or flexibility that precludes them from making the right choice – the choice to create good jobs.

### **Current Law Can Be Applied to Online Platform Business Models**

The first step in assessing whether or not current law is an impediment to innovation and flexibility is to assess how that law applies to the business models adopted by the dominant online platform companies. Although the experience of hailing a ride by watching pictures of cars on your smartphone was new with the advent of Uber, the experience of paying a company to procure transportation from point A to point B on our nation’s city streets is not new. In fact, even the argument that a company using new technology to connect people who need rides with people who want rides is a technology company and not a transportation company is not new. Consider this opening paragraph from a recent article<sup>3</sup> on ridesharing platforms:

In 1933, Elizabeth Rhone called Try Me Cab Company’s advertised phone number to order a cab. The company dispatched a vehicle bearing its logo. Unfortunately, the driver negligently operated the cab and injured Ms. Rhone. She sued the company for her injuries, but the company responded by saying it is not ‘engaged in carrying passengers for hire.’ Rather, the company characterized itself as “a nonprofit-sharing corporation,

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<sup>1</sup> Cotter v. Lyft, Inc., Case No. 13-cv-04065-VC, Order Denying Cross-Motions for Summary Judgment (N.D. CA) (3/11/15); <http://www.rstreet.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Lyft-summary-judgment.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bna.com/gig-workers-need-n57982087532/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2995176#](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2995176#)

incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia for the purpose of furnishing its members a telephone service and the advantages offered by use of the corporate name, while the company did not own this or any other cab.” Although Try Me Cab Company held the license to operate the cabs, it maintained that drivers were the passengers’ independent contractors and claimed that it was not liable for Ms. Rhone’s harm.

Much of the debate over the online platform economy, however, is dominated by words like “disruptive,” “innovative,” and “new.”<sup>4</sup> If, in fact, online platform companies are service providers and not just intermediaries between individuals providing services and individuals needing services, however, the business model in terms of worker classification looks rather conventional. My former colleagues David Weil and Tanya Goldman have differentiated between platforms that create virtual markets and those that provide branded services. Much of the litigation over employee status has been against the online platforms that provide branded services, such as Uber and Handy.<sup>5</sup> In those examples, the platform company endeavors to deliver a consistent experience for customers – looking at Uber’s website it is clear that they want the public to associate Uber with a ride that is always fast, reliable, safe, and ubiquitous.<sup>6</sup>

While the outcomes of employee status cases are dependent on the particular facts and circumstances, business models premised on the need to provide a consistent branded service tend to require a level of integration and control of the workers involved that is indicative of employee status<sup>7</sup>. For example, in order to appeal to a particular segment of the market that the platform company has decided is most profitable to serve, branded service platforms typically set the price at which workers offer the service to the customer. Similarly, in order to ensure consistent quality of service, branded service platforms typically dictate many aspects of the way in which workers provide the service. Moreover, thus far, most of the branded service platforms provide services that do not require a degree of worker skill or specialization, such as driving, cleaning or delivering groceries.

Moreover, under the FLSA<sup>8</sup> and the NLRA,<sup>9</sup> the opportunity for entrepreneurial gain or loss is a key indicator of employee or independent contractor status. Looking at Uber as emblematic of the branded service platform model, the entrepreneurial opportunity appears very constrained. Although Uber tends to be rather secretive about how its platform works, recent reports have revealed the following rules<sup>10</sup> that apply to drivers’ behavior:

- Drivers must accept at least 80% of assigned rides or they may be deactivated.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/05/15/is-the-gig-economy-working>;

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/19/books/review/wild-ride-adam-lashinsky-uber-airbnb.html>

<sup>5</sup> Weil and Goldman, “Labor Standards, the Fissured Workplace, and the On-Demand Economy,” Perspectives on Work (2016); [http://www.fissuredworkplace.net/assets/Weil\\_Goldman.pdf](http://www.fissuredworkplace.net/assets/Weil_Goldman.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.uber.com/ride/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs13.htm> (FLSA economic realities test); NLRB v. United Insurance Co. of America, 390 U.S. 254 (1968) (NLRA common law agency test).

<sup>8</sup> Solis v. Cascom, Inc., 2011 WL 10501391, at \*4 (S.D. Ohio Sept. 21, 2011).

<sup>9</sup> FedEx Home Delivery v. N.L.R.B., 563 F.3d 492 (D.C. Cir. 2009).

<sup>10</sup> Rosenblat and Stark, Algorithmic Labor and Information Asymmetries: A Case Study of Uber’s Drivers , International Journal of Communications 10(2016);

[https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2686227](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2686227)

- Drivers have only about 15 seconds to decide whether to accept an assigned ride.
- Drivers may be required to explain any deviations from GPS suggested routes.
- Drivers do not know their passengers' destination when they decide whether or not to accept a ride.
- Uber sets the price charged to the customer for the ride and may change it at any time without prior notice to drivers.

When you put all of these rules together, it is hard to see how Uber drivers have the opportunity to exercise entrepreneurial initiative. These rules preclude them from using their business acumen to decide whether a ride provides an optimal opportunity for profit, as they have to make an almost instant decision whether to accept it or not and do not know how much they will be paid for the ride, how long it will take or where it will lead them when they make the decision. Moreover, they cannot use their own business goodwill to make their “businesses” more profitable as they lack the authority to set their own prices. Setting prices is a fundamental feature of business decisionmaking. Instead, they have the ability to make more money by working more hours, not through the exercise of entrepreneurial or management skill. But that is no different than employees in many settings who have the option to add additional hours to their work week. Having the option to add hours does not transform an employee into an entrepreneur.

### **Debunking the Myth that Current Law Stifles Innovation and Impedes Flexibility**

This hearing is premised on the uncontroversial premise that innovation and flexibility are positive attributes for participants in our economy and that the law should at best encourage them and at the least not create obstacles to companies achieving them. This premise necessarily then raises the question of whether the application of current law stifles innovation and impedes flexibility.

#### *Innovation:*

Many in the online platform sector have created a narrative that bending their business models to fit our Depression-era worker protection statutes will stifle the innovation that is crucial to the success of their companies. In a 2015 Atlantic article, David Mack, then Lyft Director of Public Affairs, suggested that a new definition of employment was needed to avoid burdening innovation in the ridesharing sector.<sup>11</sup> In introducing legislation to clarify the tax laws in order to facilitate online platform companies' classification of workers as independent contractors, Senator John Thune explained that he introduced the bill because he “think[s] it’s important for Congress to do its part to keep up and ensure our laws don’t prevent or stifle future growth” of the gig economy.<sup>12</sup> Senator Thune’s legislation was endorsed by 10 of the biggest online platform companies, including Uber, Instacart and Handy, who in a letter to Thune asserted that

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<sup>11</sup> “In the Sharing Economy, No One’s an Employee,” Gillian B. White, The Atlantic (June 8, 2015); <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/06/in-the-sharing-economy-no-ones-an-employee/395027/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.thune.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2017/8/ten-innovative-technology-companies-support-thune-s-new-gig-act>

his legislation would enable continued innovation in their sector.<sup>13</sup> Harris and Krueger also echoed this theme of the possible conflict between our current legal regime for classifying workers and promoting innovation. They asserted that the existing legal dichotomy “creates much legal uncertainty for workers and intermediaries” and that such uncertainty “may stifle innovation.”<sup>14</sup>

While assertions of a connection between the ability to treat workers as independent contractors and the fostering of innovation are easy to find, it is harder to find explanations of the causal mechanism. Harris and Krueger rely primarily on what they perceive is an ill fit between the FLSA’s requirements that employers track employees’ time and the looser and more fluid nature of work hours for those engaged in online platform work. Larry Mishel and Ross Eisenbrey of the Economic Policy Institute provide a strong refutation of that assertion.<sup>15</sup> As they point out, the rules set by platforms – Uber in particular – provide very powerful incentive for drivers to devote concentrated time on the app, dispelling the idea that Uber drivers frequently mix personal time with their driving time or that they constantly switch back and forth between different apps, such as Uber and Lyft. As Noam Scheiber documented in the New York Times, Uber has even adopted behavioral tools based on psychological research to push drivers to stay on the app longer.<sup>16</sup>

Further undermining the assertion that gig workers’ hours are immeasurable and therefore any tracking requirement would necessitate an innovation-stifling reconception of how the platforms operate is the fact that the companies are among the most tech savvy in history that have found ways to track workers and customers to a degree that many find alarming. Uber now touts its minimum income guarantee for drivers who meet stringent standards for frequent usage of the app.<sup>17</sup> Implicit in Uber’s ability to provide a minimum income guarantee is its ability to track the number of hours that drivers are working – exactly the kind of tracking that Uber would have to do if their drivers were classified as employees. It is hard to imagine that a company that until recently had a practice of tracking the whereabouts of its customers after they finished their rides and without their knowledge cannot track the amount of time its drivers spend working for the company.<sup>18</sup>

The best evidence that employee status is not an obstacle to innovation are the examples of online platform companies that have made the choice not to fight application of the current

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<sup>13</sup> [https://www.thune.senate.gov/public/\\_cache/files/188c3824-417e-48b5-9239-6af4b5dff1c6/78A9306A1CA70CFC597175E47D8189EF.thune-new-gig.pdf](https://www.thune.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/188c3824-417e-48b5-9239-6af4b5dff1c6/78A9306A1CA70CFC597175E47D8189EF.thune-new-gig.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Harris and Krueger, “A Proposal for Modernizing Labor Laws for Twenty-First Century Work: The ‘Independent Worker’”, The Hamilton Project, Policy Brief 2015-10 (December 2015); [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/modernizing\\_labor\\_laws\\_for\\_twenty\\_first\\_century\\_work\\_policy\\_brief.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/modernizing_labor_laws_for_twenty_first_century_work_policy_brief.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Mishel and Eisenbrey, “Uber business model does not justify a new ‘independent worker’ category,” Economic Policy Institute Report (March 17, 2016); <http://www.epi.org/publication/uber-business-model-does-not-justify-a-new-independent-worker-category/>

<sup>16</sup> “How Uber Uses Psychological Tricks to Push Its Drivers’ Buttons,” Noam Scheiber, New York Times (April 2, 2017); [https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/04/02/technology/uber-drivers-psychological-tricks.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/04/02/technology/uber-drivers-psychological-tricks.html?_r=0)

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.uber.com/drive/atlanta/resources/driver-partner-guaranteed-hourly-fares/>;  
<https://www.uber.com/drive/pittsburgh/resources/guarantee-faq/>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/08/29/547113818/uber-ends-its-controversial-post-ride-tracking-of-users-location>

definition of employee status and, instead, have embraced providing their workers with the security and stability that comes with employee status. I have had the privilege to spend time with several CEOs of online platform companies that have made this choice and have enjoyed watching their business flourish.<sup>19</sup> For example, Dan Teran, CEO of Managed by Q, an online platform company that provides office cleaning services on-demand, has classified all of his workers as employees and provides a wide array of benefits, including profit sharing, in addition to paying minimum wage and overtime, making workers compensation contributions on their behalf and meeting Social Security and Medicare contribution requirements. Dan is frequently recognized as a highly successful entrepreneur in the online platform economy.<sup>20</sup>

### *Flexibility:*

As the title of this hearing suggests, there is a perception that: (1) workers in the online platform economy value flexibility in their work arrangements over all other attributes of work; (2) that online platform business model provides the desired flexibility; and (3) that employee status impedes achieving the desired level of flexibility. I think that there are flaws in all three of these assumptions.

There is a little doubt that a segment of online platform workers – perhaps a large segment – value the flexibility that platform work offers. In an article in the Harvard Business Review, Alex Rosenblat, a sociologist conducting an in depth ethnography of Uber drivers, found that for part-time ride hail drivers, who use their online platform work to supplement their primary source of income, the flexibility to work when and as much as they want is important.<sup>21</sup> In addition, a study done by Uber’s Head of Economic Research Jonathan Hall and Princeton economist Alan Krueger found that 85 percent of survey respondents agreed that flexibility was a major motivator for driving for Uber<sup>22</sup>. Thus, many online platform companies justify their use of the independent contractor status as a means of facilitating workers’ desired flexibility.

There also should be little doubt that flexibility – even radical flexibility -- is not inconsistent with employee status. For example, to decide which days to work is not an uncommon attribute of workers who engaged by temp agencies and who are undisputedly employees. As my colleague Professor Ben Sachs noted:

The bottom line is that workers can choose when and how much to work, and can even work without immediate supervision, and still be employees within the meaning of the

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<sup>19</sup> “These Startups Are Ditching the Uber Model and Hiring Full Time Workers,” Miranda Katz, Wired.com (April 7, 2017); <https://www.wired.com/2017/04/these-startups-are-ditching-the-uber-model-and-hiring-full-time-workers/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/pictures/ml145klmm/dan-teran-26/#1066c7d63d7b;>

[https://hub.jhu.edu/2017/01/17/dan-teran-forbes-30-under-30-all-star/;](https://hub.jhu.edu/2017/01/17/dan-teran-forbes-30-under-30-all-star/)

<https://www.bizjournals.com/newyork/news/2016/08/24/dan-teran-upstart-100-reinventor-managed-by-q.html>

<sup>21</sup> <https://hbr.org/2016/11/what-motivates-gig-economy-workers>

<sup>22</sup> Hall and Krueger, An Analysis of the Labor Market for Uber’s Driver-Partners in the United States, Working Papers (Princeton University Industrial Relations Section) (2015); <http://arks.princeton.edu/ark:/88435/dsp010z708z67d>

law. Despite the trope, a legal determination that workers are employees does not require the loss of this kind of flexibility.<sup>23</sup>

In their excellent report on this topic, the National Employment Law Project noted cases involving a wide array of workers who both enjoyed the flexibility to accept or decline work and set their schedules, but who were nonetheless determined by courts to be employees, including cake decorators, home researchers, nurses, couriers and restaurant workers.<sup>24</sup>

What is in doubt is how real the promise of flexibility is for online platform workers. They clearly have the flexibility to work when they want to work. Generally, the online platform companies do not impose or assign work schedules on their workers. The platforms do, however, create strong incentives to influence when, where and for how long workers provide services. For example, Uber offers minimum guaranteed income only to drivers who stay on the app for fifty minutes out of every hour and engages in surge pricing to lure more drivers onto the app during peak hours and in high demand areas.<sup>25</sup> In an interview with NPR's Aarthi Shahani, Uber driver David McKee told Shahani, "No, you don't feel like your own boss at all. The only thing you control is the time when you sign on and sign off. Other than that, Uber controls everything." As discussed above, this kind of narrow flexibility can certainly be accommodated within the definition of employee status.

What also is in doubt, however, is how workers balance a desire for flexibility with the burden of low pay and lack of protections and benefits that accompany independent contractor status. Of course, in a world where all else is equal, people like flexibility. There is recent data suggesting that many online platform workers don't want the kind of flexibility that the online platform world offers when they can only get it by giving up basic employment protections. The high turnover rates among online platform workers suggests that many workers are not satisfied working for these platform companies. Research by the JP Morgan Chase Institute found that "one in six online platform workers is new in any given month and more than half of participants quit within a year."<sup>26</sup> Moreover, these researchers found that as the national unemployment rate has declined, indicating an increase in opportunities in other parts of the economy, participation in the online platform sector has decreased. Finally, an earlier JP Morgan Chase Institute study showed that turnover was lower among participants who have the highest levels of income volatility – the young and the poor.<sup>27</sup> Taken together, these data paint a picture of many workers willing to abandon the flexibility of online platform work if they can find other employment.

### **What Are the Risks of Amending the Law to Accommodate the Online Platform Sector**

To fully assess the question posed by this hearing, it is important to examine what the risks would be of acquiescing to calls to amend our bedrock labor and employment laws to make it

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<sup>23</sup> <https://onlabor.org/uber-employee-status-and-flexibility/>

<sup>24</sup> NELP, Flexibility and the On-Demand Economy, Policy Brief (June 2016); <http://www.nelp.org/content/uploads/Policy-Brief-Flexibility-On-Demand-Economy.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> NELP, Flexibility and the On-Demand Economy, Policy Brief (June 2016); <http://www.nelp.org/content/uploads/Policy-Brief-Flexibility-On-Demand-Economy.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.jpmorganchase.com/corporate/institute/document/jpmc-institute-online-platform-econ-brief.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.jpmorganchase.com/corporate/institute/document/jpmc-institute-volatility-2-report.pdf>



easier for online platform companies to opt to treat their workers as independent contractors. I believe that the risks are significant:

*Continued risk shift:* One way of thinking about what happens when a worker is classified as an independent contractor instead of an employee is that much of the risk attendant to acting in the economy shifts from the employer or the government to the individual. The Yale political scientist Jacob Hacker described this phenomenon in his book, “The Great Risk Shift: The New Economic Insecurity and the Decline of the American Dream.”<sup>28</sup> When workers become independent contractors, they become responsible for negotiating on their own for family sustaining wages, providing a safe workplace, saving for a secure retirement, and sustaining themselves through periods of unemployment. Our basic labor and employment laws were premised in part on the idea that individuals were not best suited to carry so much risk. Any change in the law that further facilitates that risk shift without an assessment of whether those to whom it is being shifted can bear it, risks great damage not just to the individuals involved but to the economy as a whole.

*Slippery slope of declining labor standards:* While drafters of legislation to address the perceived needs of the online platform economy may intend to enact a narrow fix, the risk of in fact creating a giant loophole is great. Although our current definition of employee and independent contractor might lack laser-like precision, they are the product of decades of interpretation and clarification. The likelihood that Congress could draft new definitions that would be precise enough to preclude companies outside of what we now consider the online platform economy from increasing the classification of workers as independent contractors seems remote. Moreover, a new category risks incentivizing employers who currently treat workers as employees and provide all the attendant protections to moving their workers to a category that diminishes those protections. Thus, rewriting the definitions risks lowering labor standards for a much broader segment of the workforce than intended – not to mention decades of additional litigation to tease out any new standards in terms of how they are applied. This risk is especially unwarranted when viewed in light of the small size of the online platform economy – less than one percent of the workforce.<sup>29</sup>

*Need to Raise Labor Standards:* In my opinion, the most urgent challenge facing our economy is how to raise labor standards. In last week’s release of the August jobs report, we once again saw sluggish wage growth.<sup>30</sup> The recent lackluster increase in Americans’ income is a part of a decades-long pattern of wage stagnation<sup>31</sup> and increasing income inequality.<sup>32</sup> In the absence of any evidence that addressing the concerns of the online platform economy will raise wages or reduce income inequality, our national attention is better spent on policies that will: raising the minimum wage, increasing the overtime threshold and encouraging full employment.

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<sup>28</sup> <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-great-risk-shift-9780195335347?cc=us&lang=en&>

<sup>29</sup> Katz and Krueger, “The Rise and Nature of Alternative Work Arrangements in the United States, 1995-2015,” (December 2016); <http://arks.princeton.edu/ark:/88435/dsp01zs25xb933>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-economy/u-s-job-growth-slows-in-august-wage-growth-retreats-idUSKCN1BC3Q4>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.epi.org/nominal-wage-tracker/>

<sup>32</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/posteverything/wp/2017/08/14/the-whys-of-increasing-inequality-a-graphical-portrait/?utm\\_term=.9047d8d90336](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/posteverything/wp/2017/08/14/the-whys-of-increasing-inequality-a-graphical-portrait/?utm_term=.9047d8d90336)

**Conclusion:**

The online platform sector is an exciting and vibrant part of our economy. It provides income and convenience for millions of American workers and consumers. It is an admirable goal of the Committee to seek ways to foster its positive attributes – flexibility, innovative spirit, efficiency and convenience. I believe that the choice between those positive attributes and maintaining decent labor standards is a false choice. We should all share the goal of growing the American economy in ways that create a better future for everyone involved in this sector – platform owners, consumers, and workers. The innovation that Americans should be most proud of is our nation’s long history of adapting to change – including technological change – in ways that have produced the most enduring and prosperous middle class in history.