



Is Congress Poised To Reform Laws Affecting The Gig Economy?

Insights

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In recent months, we've blogged about [New Year's predictions](#) for the freelance or gig economy in 2017, [New Year resolutions](#), and what the [Trump presidency might mean for gig workers in general](#), (specifically, the President's immigration and tax policies, as well as his overall pro-business/pro-American jobs outlook). What we're most curious about for 2017 is whether we might see new federal laws advancing the sharing economy, especially given that [the 2016 GOP platform](#) hailed the industry as being in need of comprehensive reform.

While Congress has yet to pass any new legislation directly affecting the gig economy, it appears poised to take on such issues in the near future. On February 28, a group of influential policy makers got together in Washington, D.C. to discuss these issues during a panel discussion called ["Advancing the Social Contract for Gig Economy Workers."](#) It was attended by House Representatives, Senators, employers, business owners, and business groups, and included a discussion of topics that will impact this relatively new but ever growing segment of workers.

One such topic was possible changes to the current system of classifying workers as either employees or independent contractors. Another was the concept of portable benefits – allowing benefits such as health insurance, unemployment insurance, and retirement benefits to follow workers as they move from job to job. Also discussed was the Department of Labor's plan to add new questions to its contingent worker survey in May of this year – a survey last updated in 2005. This will hopefully yield more accurate statistics concerning worker participation in the freelance/"gig" economy. "Workers [in the gig economy] deserve serious and strong protections, a priority shared by both Republicans and Democrats," Rep. Tim Walberg (R-Mich.) said. The meeting could lead to big things for the gig economy in 2017 and beyond.