

NPR Report Discusses Growing Interest In Portable Benefits

Insights

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Late last week, [NPR aired a story](#) discussing the governmental efforts to bring portable benefits to gig workers. You can read a transcript of the story or listen to it by [clicking here](#). I was fortunate enough to have been interviewed by Yuki Noguchi for the story, discussing one of the biggest reasons most companies do not offer benefits to their workers benefits: “They don’t want to have them categorized as ‘employees.’ Under the law, employees have more rights than independent contractors — for benefits, to unionize, and other worker protections. With the growth of contingent work, that legal distinction between employee and contractor blurs, and courts and regulators are now wrestling with questions of classification and worker rights. Rich Meneghello is a Portland, Ore., lawyer who represents employers. ‘There’s a real solid concern that if they offer benefits packages towards their workers that these workers would then be classified as employees,’ he says.”

This area is rapidly evolving, and although no state has yet passed a portable benefits law, several have debated the concept (Washington, New Jersey) and several more have them on their drawing board (California, New York). Combined with [the federal effort to encourage portable benefit experimentation](#), it appears that there is growing momentum in this area and real progress might be made by the end of this calendar year.

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