

Labor and Public Employees Committee
Public Testimony of the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF)
H.B. 6343: An Act Ensuring Fair Employee Protections for Gig Workers
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The Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF) is a statewide, nonprofit organization that advocates for and empowers women and girls in Connecticut, especially those who are underserved and marginalized. For forty-seven years, CWEALF has been a leading advocate in the development of policy solutions that advance women's economic security, combat discrimination, and increase gender equity in Connecticut.

CWEALF supports H.B. 6343: *An Act Ensuring Fair Employee Protections for Gig Workers*.

As unemployment numbers continue to rise throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, many "non-traditional" workers are left behind in state and federal legislation. According to [Gig Economy's Data Hub](#), more than a quarter of workers participate in the gig economy in some capacity, including workers who hold traditional full-time jobs in addition to gigs, and those who solely do gig work. As the traditional employment model continues to change in our state and the rest of the nation, labor laws should also follow suit and contemporize to ensure all workers are protected from unfair employment practices.

Women, especially women of color, are overrepresented in low-wage jobs on the frontlines of the crisis. Many of these occupations lack access to critical policies like paid sick leave or paid family leave. Although there is no definitive breakdown of gig workers by gender, according to the [Future of Work initiative](#), women are more likely to earn supplemental income and to work part-time compared to their male counterparts. They are also more likely to engage in multi-level or direct marketing and to sell goods online. Part-time workers are the least likely to have access to benefits or continue to be paid during a downturn, and since women are more likely to work part-time, single-mother households are specifically affected during coronavirus-related closures.

The COVID-19 public health crisis has proven that the non-traditional workers, especially gig workers, are bearing the burden of inconsistent and outdated labor laws

in our state and across the country. Despite the need for gig workers throughout the pandemic, they are often classified as independent contractors rather than employees. Gaps in federal and state laws alike have left workers without meaningful protections and have failed to provide gig workers with the benefits of trade unions, employer provided healthcare, a minimum wage, and other opportunities for growth and sustainable employment.

CWEALF urges the Committee to pass H.B. 6343 to benefit all workers, regardless of the traditionality of their work, and ensure they are offered fair employment protections.