

# Economic Policy Institute



April 18, 2023

The Honorable Bernie Sanders, Chair  
The Honorable Bill Cassidy, Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**Re: Nomination of Julie Su to serve as Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor**

Dear Chairman Sanders, Ranking Member Cassidy, and Members of the Committee:

We, the 94 undersigned organizations, write to you to urge the Committee to advance, without delay, the confirmation of Julie Su to serve as Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor. We represent groups committed to centering worker rights and economic justice in policy at the federal, state, and local level.

The Department of Labor's (DOL) basic mission is "to foster, promote, and develop the welfare of the wage earners, job seekers, and retirees of the United States; improve working conditions; advance opportunities for profitable employment; and assure work-related benefits and rights." Few people are as uniquely well-suited to lead the Department of Labor in executing this mission as Julie Su. She has devoted her life to fighting for workers' rights, holding exploitative employers accountable, leveling the playing field for high-road employers, and doing pioneering work to protect the most vulnerable of workers.

Over the past two years, Deputy Secretary Su has proven herself to be an indispensable partner to Secretary Marty Walsh. Her recent experience and proven track record as a leader at the Department of Labor will enable a smooth leadership transition for the agency and a continuation of the agenda they both charted, one that will better protect workers from exploitation, but one that also has due regard for the regulated community and employers who are playing by the rules. Indeed, that is why Deputy Secretary Su is so well respected by so many in the business community in her home state of California, because she is someone who respects all stakeholders, including high-road employers who understand that their success is built by and with their workforces.

This is a critical time for the Department of Labor to continue supporting workers through the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. DOL's key priorities in the coming years include:

- Finalizing the regulations that define who is an employee and who is an independent contractor, consistent with decades of Supreme Court precedent. It should be noted that contrary to the loud and specious allegations of some in the business community, the proposed regulation explicitly stated that DOL has no legal authority to adopt the so-called "ABC test" to determine employee status, showing proper respect for well-established federal law.

# Economic Policy Institute



- Efforts to modernize the unemployment insurance program, with a particular eye toward making it more impervious to fraud and more equitable in how benefits are paid.
- Implementing action items from the White House Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment.
- Implementing components of the [Good Jobs Initiative](#).
- Carrying out recently-announced interagency initiatives between DOL and the Department of Health and Human Services in order to combat exploitative child labor violations.
- Improving access to good-paying jobs through workforce development programs, expanding pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities, and addressing workforce needs in sectors impacted by recent federal investments in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, CHIPS Act, and Inflation Reduction Act.

Continuity of leadership will enable the Department to best carry out its mission – Deputy Secretary Su’s service as Deputy Secretary ensures that she has a deep understanding of the inner workings of the DOL, its resources, and operations.

Deputy Secretary Su has deep experience addressing the particular needs of low-wage workers. Given the Department’s finite resources, her ability to understand and address the unique vulnerabilities of workers in low-wage, high violation industries is especially important.

Deputy Secretary Su has also done pioneering work for the labor and human rights of immigrant workers. Her work on the case of trafficked garment workers in 1995 contributed to the creation of seminal federal immigration protections for human trafficking victims, and she has continued advocating for immigrant worker communities throughout her career.

Finally, Deputy Secretary Su’s experience in state government has also left her well-positioned to manage the relationship between the US DOL and their numerous state level counterparts. The Department of Labor needs close, effective collaboration with state and local government partners on enforcement, administration of workforce training and other programs, and more.

We strongly urge the HELP Committee to swiftly advance her nomination to a vote on the Senate floor. Please do not hesitate to contact Samantha Sanders, [ssanders@epi.org](mailto:ssanders@epi.org), or Judy Conti, [jconti@nelp.org](mailto:jconti@nelp.org), should you have any questions about this remarkably qualified candidate.

Sincerely,

## **National Organizations**

A Better Balance

AFL-CIO

AFSCME

American Federation of Government Employees

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)



# Economic Policy Institute



NATIONAL  
EMPLOYMENT  
LAW  
PROJECT

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO  
Care in Action  
Center for American Progress  
Center for Economic and Policy Research  
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)  
Center for WorkLife Law  
Child Labor Coalition  
Civic Ventures  
Coalition of Immokalee Workers  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Communications Workers of America (CWA)  
Economic Policy Institute  
Economic Roundtable  
Family Values @ Work  
Farmworker Justice  
Food Chain Workers Alliance  
In the Public Interest  
Jobs to Move America  
Jobs With Justice  
Justice in Motion  
JustLeadershipUSA  
MomsRising  
National Black Worker Center  
National Center for Law and Economic Justice  
National Center for Women's Equity in Apprenticeship and Employment at Chicago Women in Trades  
National Consumers League  
National Council for Occupational Safety and Health  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Domestic Workers Alliance  
National Education Association  
National Employment Lawyers Association  
National Employment Law Project  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Sierra Club  
National Workrights Institute  
Our Revolution  
Oxfam America  
Public Justice  
ROC United  
Sciencecorps

# Economic Policy Institute



NATIONAL  
EMPLOYMENT  
LAW  
PROJECT

Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
Transport Workers Union of America  
UnidosUS  
United Steelworkers (USW)  
Workplace Justice Lab at Rutgers University

## **Regional, State, and Local Organizations**

32BJ SEIU  
Alabama Possible  
Casa Latina  
Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa  
Chicago Jobs Council  
Cincinnati Interfaith Workers Center  
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)  
Comunidades Sin Fronteras CSF-CT INC  
Conservation Alabama  
Dominican Development Center  
Equal Justice Center  
Every Texan  
Food Bank of Northern Nevada  
Freedom BLOC  
Hospitality Training Academy (HTA)  
Justice at Work  
Justice at Work Pennsylvania  
Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor & the Working Poor, Georgetown University  
Kentucky Equal Justice Center  
Keystone Research Center  
KWH Law Center for Social Justice and Change  
Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE)  
Maine AFL-CIO  
Milwaukee Area Service & Hospitality Workers Organization  
Mon Valley Unemployed Committee  
Montana Chapter, National Organization for Women  
New Jersey Association on Correction  
New Jersey Policy Perspective  
North Carolina Justice Center  
Northwest Workers' Justice Project  
Philadelphia Unemployment Project  
PowHer New York  
Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada  
Public Justice Center

# Economic Policy Institute



NATIONAL  
EMPLOYMENT  
LAW  
PROJECT

Sugar Law Center for Economic and Social Justice  
UC Berkeley Labor Center  
Unidad Latina en Accion CT  
Warehouse Worker Resource Center  
West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy  
Women Employed  
Women Working Together USA  
Women's Law Project  
Workers Defense Action Fund  
Workplace Justice Project at Loyola Law Clinic