

The Price of Freelancing Is Eternal Vigilance

November 12, 2020

Californian voters have largely reversed an assault on “gig” workers in that state by passing Proposition 22.

Prop 22 is a response to Assembly Bill 5, enacted in California in 2019. The idea was to reclassify many freelancers so that companies could no longer treat them as independent contractors. Instead, to keep giving them work, companies would have to



Rideshare firms Uber and Lyft were a major target of the legislation. Cabbies who work with them are contractors, not employees. Because of AB5, Uber and Lyft have been on the verge of leaving California — meaning a “victory” only for unions and others who hate market competition.

Now these firms, and many freelancers, can apparently keep operating in the state.

Mission accomplished?

Not so fast. A national version of AB5 sits in Congress, lying in wait. It has been endorsed by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, 215 Democratic co-sponsors, and Joe Biden, who may or may not be the next president of these not-so-United States. (Recounts are being conducted and allegations of election fraud are being investigated.)

If we end up with a President Biden, he may well push for a national version of AB5. Especially if the Democrats get at least 50 U.S. Senators after runoffs in Georgia are decided.

Stay vigilant. Protect our right to work.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.

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convert erstwhile freelancers to regular employees.

Doing so would mean paying additional costs. Instead, many companies simply stopped working with California-based freelancers. Freelancers of all ideological stripes protested the new law.