



**SUBMITTED WRITTEN TESTIMONY FROM
THE LONG ISLAND ASSOCIATION
BY MATTHEW COHEN
VICE PRESIDENT OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS
TO THE NEW YORK STATE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
INTERNET AND TECHNOLOGY**

**Public Hearing: Examination of the Gig Economy
October 16, 2019**

Chairwoman Savino and Senators, thank you for the opportunity to offer our input as part of the public hearing process to evaluate the gig economy in New York State.

My name is Matthew Cohen. I am Vice President of Government Affairs & Communications for the Long Island Association (“LIA”), which is the leading business organization in the region. As we continue to build an innovation economy on Long Island and throughout New York State, this has resulted in an increasing number of employers and employees operating outside the traditional employer-employee dynamic.

More Long Islanders are able to find flexible, independent work opportunities. While traditionally, freelance work offered limited opportunities for varying skill sets, the work available now in the gig economy provides opportunity for individuals of any age and from every background to find work. By simply logging into an app, Long Islanders have the opportunity to earn extra money while also maintaining the flexibility to turn off the app at any moment when their attention must be elsewhere.

This model has been a lifeline for thousands of people who rely on the flexibility that is available to them, and who do not prefer or cannot work a traditional 9-5 job. However, as important as it is to preserve the flexibility for work, it is also imperative that these workers have basic protections.

Many still favor traditional employment models like one with set salaries, employee protections and benefits, but less flexibility; or one of “self-employment,” which allows more flexibility and autonomy but comes without those higher levels of protections and benefits. With the advent of newer technology, a third model is becoming more prevalent and appealing.

As the State Legislature considers how to most appropriately respond to the gig economy, the LIA urges it to consider an updated classification for these workers. We support gig workers

retaining their right to choice and flexibility while also ensuring they receive real benefits and can earn a living wage. We also support our allies in the labor community and this is an opportunity for all stakeholders to achieve a fair solution that provides important protections for employees while also preserving the flexibility that these workers depend on, and strengthening the innovation economy driving our region's economy.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit this testimony and we respectfully urge you to consider our recommendations during your deliberations.