

# Economic Policy Institute

POLICY CENTER

U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions  
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Via [Manuel\\_Contreras@help.senate.gov](mailto:Manuel_Contreras@help.senate.gov)

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

The Economic Policy Institute Policy Center strongly opposes the nomination of Andrew Puzder for U.S. secretary of labor, and we urge you to vote against his confirmation. Simply, Mr. Puzder is particularly ill-suited for the job of advocating for and protecting American workers. Both his public statements and his record as an employer stand in sharp contrast to the Department of Labor's (DOL's) mission of enforcing labor law and improving the wages and working conditions of everyday Americans.

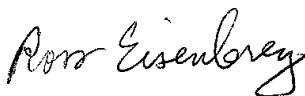
It is the Labor Department's job to enforce labor laws and promulgate rules that protect workers. However, Mr. Puzder has made it clear time and again that he does not believe in many of those rules: he has publicly opposed raising the federal minimum wage; he has opposed the updated overtime rule that would give millions of workers the right to reasonable work hours or the overtime pay they deserve; and he has opposed the Affordable Care Act, which has expanded access to affordable health insurance to tens of millions of working people.

Even in an industry notorious for low pay and poor working conditions, Mr. Puzder's record as an employer and CEO of CKE Restaurants stands out. In 60 percent of DOL investigations since 2009, CKE restaurants were found to be in violation of wage and hour laws. Notably, restaurants in violation included not only independently owned and operated franchises but also restaurants owned and operated by CKE. As secretary of labor, Mr. Puzder would be responsible for enforcing laws against wage theft—yet he has failed to ensure that the law is followed in his own restaurants. Moreover, in a recent survey, two-thirds of female CKE employees reported experiencing sexual harassment at work—alarming evidence that Mr. Puzder is either unable or unwilling to ensure a decent working environment for all workers.

For nearly four decades, policymakers have stood by passively as labor standards enforcement has weakened, the value of the minimum wage declined, and globalization undermined the economic security of workers. The Labor Department has for the past eight years been a bulwark against this erosion of workers' rights and protections, but it is clear that Mr. Puzder does not have working people's best interests at heart and will not vigorously defend them. We strongly urge you to vote against confirming Mr. Puzder and in favor of a labor secretary who will work to strengthen workers' rights and raise wages across the board.

We are not alone in our concerns about Mr. Puzder. As of January 11, 2017, more than 38,000 people have signed a petition opposing Mr. Puzder's confirmation, and that number is growing.

Signed,



Ross Eisenbrey  
Economic Policy Institute Policy Center

## **PETITION**

To: All U.S. senators

Donald Trump's nominee for labor secretary, Andrew Puzder, has a long history of anti-worker and anti-government rhetoric. His personal opposition to a higher federal minimum wage and to the new overtime rule, and his fast-food chain's record of wage theft from employees, make him the wrong choice to uphold our nation's labor laws. We urge you to reject Andrew Puzder for labor secretary.

Thank you for your time and consideration.