



EDITORIALS

Endorsement: Vote yes on Prop. 22 to help — and not smother — the gig economy



In this file photo, a man leaves the headquarters of Uber in San Francisco. Proposition 22 would allow app-based drivers to be classified as independent contractors, not employees. (AP Photo/Eric Risberg)

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voters to reject this proposition out of hand. The outlay is a response to the threat posed by the 2018 California Supreme Court [decision](#) in the Dynamex case and to [Assembly Bill 5](#), a highly contentious 2019 law championed by Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez, D-San Diego, that made it more difficult for companies to classify some workers as independent contractors instead of regular employees entitled to full benefits.

Proposition 22 would categorize drivers for application-based rideshare and delivery services as independent contractors and require they be paid at least 120% of minimum wage for hours they spend driving. Those who drive more than 15 hours a week on average would be given additional compensation to help pay for health insurance. Among other new benefits, drivers would be insured for medical costs if hurt on the job, would get new help in paying expenses and would have discrimination protections.

As critics point out, given how much time drivers spend waiting to land rides, the minimum wage guarantee is dubious, and the other benefits are far less than those guaranteed to full-time workers. But these are gig jobs in which those who choose to perform them have full autonomy. A majority of the Legislature and Gov. Gavin Newsom still fail to grasp the fact that these jobs are of a different nature than the binary standard set in state law of regular employees and independent contractors.

Shutting down gig jobs that have helped [at least 300,000](#) rideshare drivers in California make ends meet during the recession caused by the coronavirus pandemic would be devastating to the gig economy and the many people who work in it — and who use it.

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Of course, it is far from ideal to have a significant number of Americans who don't have adequate health benefits because they patch together their income from gig jobs and other part-time work. But that reflects a failure of current and past Congresses and presidents to build a health-care system that improves on the 2010 Affordable Care Act and provides Americans with access to care seen in other affluent nations. Punishing rideshare drivers for the failings of Washington, D.C., is cruel.

State and federal lawmakers should respond to the gig revolution not by smothering it but by doing a better job of ensuring all workers have a decent safety net. The San Diego Union-Tribune Editorial Board recommends a yes vote on Proposition 22.



The San Diego Union-Tribune Editorial Board

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