

Using Consumer Laws to Protect Workers from Corporate Fraud and Misconduct

July 28, 2021

Hosted by the Economic Policy Institute, Harvard Labor and Worklife Program, National Consumer Law Center, and Towards Justice, this webinar provides a lively discussion among advocates, attorneys, academics, and current and former government officials about how consumer laws can be used to protect workers and address corporate abuse in the labor market. Often, workers are exploited in ways that can be addressed through both consumer and workplace laws - or in ways that fall in the cracks between the two:

- A janitorial company sells franchises to workers, with unfair and fraudulent terms under which no one can make a profit;
- A trucking company provides training for drivers, while also roping them into lease-to-own contracts requiring excessive repayment if the driver leaves the job;
- A gig company conceals from workers information about pricing and jobs; or
- An app-based delivery company promises workers their tips, or represents to customers that tips will go to workers - but instead keeps some or all gratuities for its own use.

Government agencies and worker/consumer advocates alike have begun to rely on laws traditionally used to protect consumers as a way of addressing unfair and deceptive labor market practices that target working people, often immigrants and people of color. (Here's a blog post on the topic that provides more background.)

Speakers:

Veena Dubal, University of California Hastings College of Law
Seth Frotman, Student Borrower Protection Center
Terri Gerstein, Worklife Program, Economic Policy Institute
Patricio Marquez, Washington State Attorney General's Office
Lorelei Salas, Open Society Foundations Leadership in Government Fellow
Hillary Schwab, Fair Work, P.C.
David Seligman, Towards Justice

