

Chairman Lamar Alexander  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
United States Senate

Ranking Member Patty Murray  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
United States Senate

January 25, 2017

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray:

The undersigned organizations write to respectfully request that you allow members of the HELP Committee as much time as they need to question Andrew Puzder fully during his confirmation hearing. We also request that you allow present and former employees of CKE Restaurants to testify as to the working conditions in Mr. Puzder's company.

Whereas a limit of one round of questioning may have been appropriate for some nominees in the past, Mr. Puzder is not a traditional Cabinet-level nominee. Unlike his recent predecessors, he does not have a long career in public service, nor a record of votes, speeches or actions on matters of public policy that accompany such a career. If confirmed, Mr. Puzder will hold an office that impacts virtually every working person in America. Members of the Committee must be able to evaluate his qualifications and fitness for this role. One round of questions will be insufficient for this formidable task.

In this case, all the Committee has are scant quotes, interviews and writings, as well as the advertising campaign for Mr. Puzder's restaurants, none of which reflect well on his philosophical temperament to be the nation's chief advocate for workers. Mr. Puzder's prior statements in the public record suggest that he possesses a derogatory and sexist view of women in the workplace and a disdain for those who make low wages in our society. These are precisely the workers that need a devoted champion in the Department of Labor, and precisely those workers on whose backs he has made millions. Moreover, his company is privately held and therefore, we have little public information on his business practices and holdings. DOL data, recent reports, and testimony at a forum held by Senate Democrats detail allegations of substantial illegal workplace practices at CKE Restaurants and a general culture that promotes objectification and harassment of women workers by co-workers, supervisors and the general public.

Working people who depend on the Department of Labor to vindicate their rights deserve to know in detail how Mr. Puzder plans to lead DOL in enforcing some of our nation's most important laws including, but not limited to, the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act, various protections for Veterans, and the civil rights protections owed those working under federal contracts. Members of the HELP Committee need sufficient time to question him about his plans for the Department of Labor, and one round of questions is insufficient for that level of inquiry.

Mr. Puzder surely has the right to defend against opposition to his nomination, and we respect providing him the opportunity to do so. But a man who has been so outspoken in his critique of employer mandates, whether they be by law or regulation, must be subjected to rigorous examination of how he will protect the rule of law during his tenure as the Secretary of Labor.

Hearing from CKE workers could further illuminate what it is like to work for Mr. Puzder and his company. Of course, should you call workers with complaints, he would have the right to call workers with favorable experiences, and HELP Committee members could judge credibility and persuasiveness for themselves.

Moreover, as an executive in one of the highest-violation industries in the country, Mr. Puzder stands to personally benefit from lax enforcement of our nations' employment laws, or the reversal of important regulations governing wages, safety, and benefits. Specifically, we should know if Mr. Puzder plans to recuse himself from any matters that would directly impact the fast food industry, as well as any matters involving the new overtime regulation, which is being challenged in court by the International Franchise Association, on whose Board of Directors he sat until very recently. The conflicts of interest are obvious and potentially many and the HELP Committee needs to examine in detail how he plans to avoid not just actual conflicts of interest, but even the mere appearance of them, all to ensure the utmost integrity of the U.S. Department of Labor.

If Mr. Puzder is truly qualified and suited for the position of Secretary of Labor, he should welcome a thorough hearing in which he can try to put to rest the many valid concerns surrounding his nomination. He would have nothing to hide and would not be in need of the protection, or at least the appearance of protection, that a truncated hearing would bring.

We urge you to reconsider your decision to limit questions posed to Mr. Puzder during his confirmation hearing. Perhaps more than any other Cabinet agency, the Department of Labor has a direct effect on the day-to-day lives of virtually all Americans. They deserve disclosure, transparency, and a chance to know the man who may be the next Secretary of Labor.

Respectfully,

9to5, National Association of Working Women  
A Better Balance  
Advancing Opportunity  
AFL-CIO  
The Agenda Project  
American Association for Access, Equity and Diversity  
American Association of University Women (AAUW)  
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)  
American Sustainable Business Council  
Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Asian Law Caucus  
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)  
Bend the Arc Jewish Action  
Center for Community Change Action  
Center for Law and Social Policy  
Center for Policy Initiatives  
Center for Popular Democracy  
Center for Workers Justice  
Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, Inc. (CDM)  
Chicago Jobs Council  
Colorado WINS  
Communications Workers of America  
Community Service Society of New York  
ConnectiCOSH (Connecticut Council on Occupational Safety & Health)  
Corporate Accountability International  
Daily Kos  
DC Employment Justice Center  
Demand Progress  
Demos  
Disciples Center for Public Witness (Disciples of Christ)  
East Tennessee Jobs With Justice  
EMILY's List  
EPI Policy Center

Equal Justice Center  
Equal Rights Advocates  
Equal Pay Today  
Every Voice  
Fair World Project  
Family Equality Council  
Family Values @ Work  
Farmworker Justice  
Feminist Majority Foundation  
First Shift Justice Project  
Food & Water Watch  
Food Chain Workers Alliance  
FORGE, Inc.  
Freedom Network USA  
Friends of the Earth  
Greater Hartford Legal  
Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition  
Greater Syracuse Council on Occupational Safety and Health  
Health Justice Project, Loyola University Chicago School of Law  
Indiana Institute for Working Families  
Institute for Science and Human Values  
Interfaith Center for Worker Justice of San Diego County  
Interfaith Worker Justice  
In The Public Interest  
Jobs With Justice  
Justice in Motion  
Kentucky Equal Justice Center  
Labor-Religion Coalition of New York State  
Lambda Legal  
La Raza Centro Legal  
Laundry, Distribution, Food Service Joint Board, Workers United, SEIU  
LAW Project of Los Angeles  
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law  
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights  
Legal Aid at Work (formerly Legal Aid Society-Employment Law Center)  
Legal Aid Society  
Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia  
Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy  
Main Street Alliance  
Make it Work  
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute  
Michigan League for Public Policy  
Mi Familia Vota

Moms Rising  
NAACP  
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)  
National Black Justice Coalition  
National Center for Law and Economic Justice  
National Center for Lesbian Rights  
National Center for Transgender Equality  
National Consumers League  
National Council for Occupational Safety and Health (National COSH)  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Domestic Workers Alliance  
National Economic & Social Rights Initiative  
National Education Association  
National Employment Law Project  
National Employment Lawyers Association  
National Immigration Law Center  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health  
National LGBTQ Task Force  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Women's Law Center  
National Youth Employment Coalition  
New Jersey Work Environment Council  
New Hampshire Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health  
New Labor  
New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty  
New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health  
New Solutions: A Journal of Environmental and Occupational Health Policy  
North Carolina Justice Center  
Oxfam America  
Pennsylvania Unemployment Project  
People Demanding Action  
PICO National Network  
PolicyLink  
Policy Matters Ohio  
Pride at Work  
Public Citizen  
Public Justice Center  
Restaurant Opportunities Center United  
Rhode Island Center for Justice  
San Diego and Imperial Counties Labor Council, AFL-CIO  
Santa Clara County Wage Theft Coalition  
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)

SEIU 32BJ  
SEIU Local 6 Property Services NW  
SEIU Local 200United  
SEIU Local 721  
SEIU Local 1199/UGT  
SEIU Local 1996/SPT  
SEIU Florida Public Services Union  
SEIU Healthcare 1199NW  
SEIU Healthcare Florida Local 1991  
SEIU Healthcare Minnesota  
SEIU Healthcare Wisconsin  
SEIU Minnesota State Council  
SEIU Missouri/Kansas State Council  
SEIU Texas  
SEIU Wisconsin State Council  
South Florida Interfaith Worker Justice  
Stephen Prince, President of Card Marketing Services and founder of National Business Products  
The Sugar Law Center for Economic & Social Justice  
Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition  
Texas Organizing Project  
Transcend Legal  
Voices for Progress  
Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs  
Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless  
Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO  
Western New York Council on Occupational Safety & Health (WNYCOSH)  
West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy  
Women Employed  
Worker Justice Center of New York  
Workers Defense Project  
Worksafe  
YWCA USA