



PRESS RELEASE (FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)

Lawmakers Who Wrote This Lame-Duck Bill Need a Mulligan

S4194/A6033 would provide much-needed protection for independent contractors
— but only if they're golf caddies

TRENTON, N.J., DECEMBER 13, 2021—Today, the New Jersey Assembly Labor Committee unanimously advanced [Assembly Bill 6033](#), a companion bill to [Senate Bill 4194](#), which unanimously passed the Senate Labor Committee on December 6. These bills would provide something that thousands of the state's independent contractors have been clamoring for since a [standing-room-only hearing](#) on Senate Bill 4204 in December 2019: legislative protection for legitimate independent contractor work.

But A6033/S4194 would only grant that protection to one type of independent contractor in the state: golf caddies.

“It’s ironic that I am speaking here today in opposition to a bill that seeks to classify one group of people as independent contractors no matter the circumstances,” testified Debbie Abrams Kaplan, a freelance writer in Westfield, New Jersey, and co-founder of Fight For Freelancers. “It sets a terrible precedent. Stand-alone bills like this golf caddy bill only serve a narrow constituency. Instead of a bill singling out golf caddies, I’d like you to introduce and vote through a bill that covers *all* legitimate independent contractors.”

The move to protect only golf caddies comes after dozens of independent contractors in a wide range of professions testified in 2019 about the need to protect legitimate independent contractor work statewide. That testimony included truckers ([77% of truckers at the Port of NY&NJ are owner-operators](#)), freelance writers ([68% of writers are self-employed](#)), musicians, bakers, tutors and others. The New Jersey State Bar Association made clear that independent contractor work is done by [“a large swath of individuals.”](#)

“While I have no problem with golf caddies who want to remain independent contractors, I have a serious problem with anyone who thinks golf caddies are more worthy of this protection than the per-diem healthcare workers who help out during Covid-19 surges, or the translators for people who don’t speak English, or the financial advisers who help people save for retirement, or the truckers who help to keep our supply chain moving,” testified Kim Kavin, a freelance writer and editor in Long Valley, New Jersey, and co-founder of Fight For Freelancers.

The lead sponsor on the Assembly version of the caddy bill is Republican Leader Jon Bramnick, who in early 2020 [blasted the 2019 legislative attack on independent contractors](#), saying that rideshare drivers, truckers, childcare workers, landscapers, hairdressers, musicians and others were all at risk.

The lead sponsor of the Senate golf caddy bill is Senate President Steve Sweeney, a Democrat who in 2019 was the lead sponsor of S4204, which would have restricted the ability of many independent contractors’ to legally remain independent. In 2019, Sweeney [wrote an op-ed](#) saying that independent contractors trying to save their livelihoods were spreading “hysteria” and were akin to “Russian operatives trying to interfere in our elections.”

“I guess Senator Sweeney thinks differently about the guys who carry his golf clubs, or at least the lobbyists for the golf courses where they work,” Kavin says. “And Assemblyman Bramnick apparently forgot that the rest of us exist when those lobbyists knocked on his door. It’s nice to know that lawmakers in Trenton are capable of acting in a bipartisan, unanimous way, but this bill is just insulting.”

Fight for Freelancers asks that legislators vote no on the golf caddy bill when it comes for a full vote, and instead craft legislation that will protect all legitimate independent contractors in hundreds of professions statewide. The group’s leaders continue to be eager to work with any lawmakers in Trenton who are willing to do so.

Fight For Freelancers is a nonpartisan, grassroots, self-funded group of independent contractors, creatives and businesses.

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