

**i**ndependent<sup>®</sup>  
Women's Forum



Independent  
Contractor Stories



Everyday millions of women and men engage in independent work as an alternative or supplement to traditional employment. Over 50 million people freelance in America today. They are entrepreneurs, small business owners, and gig workers who choose to work on their schedule. About half of freelancers are women, many of whom are caregiving for their children or an aging parent. Some freelancers have health conditions that prohibit them from working as an employee on a set schedule. The flexibility that independent contracting provides all of these workers affords them the freedom to carve out the life they desire.

Federal legislation threatens to disrupt freelance work and place independent contracting at risk. The Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act would reclassify independent contractors nationwide as employees resulting in mass job losses, lost income, and small business failures. Similar legislation passed in California (AB5) decimated opportunities for independent contractors in the state. The PRO Act would spread that hardship from coast to coast.

The Independent Women's Forum is pleased to share the following experiences from women and men across the country who have built livelihoods and found viable income sources from independent contract work. These are a sample of the individuals who stand to lose if policies like the PRO Act advance.

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# ALABAMA

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## **Pamela Cloud**

Retired Educator

“I work part time as an independent contractor for a school system and for a university. It helps children get the quality enrichment and academic benefits that they need to achieve academic goals.”

## **Katlin Moore**

Legal Assistant

“I currently freelance as a legal assistant in my spare time. I’m also pursuing court reporting and hoped to be a freelancer. I do not want to be an “employee,” I want to be an independent contractor. I get to make my own decisions about jobs I choose to take and not to take. I get to make my own schedule, work from home, etc. If we choose to provide our services we should be allowed to without having to be deemed employees.”

## **Jennifer Whitaker**

Licensed Massage Therapist

“I have been self-employed for 19 years. Like many MTs, I worked two jobs until I had enough clientele to go out on my own. That took almost 5 years of long hours and faith that it would work out. I love my job, my clients, and the freedom of working for myself. The government has no right to infringe on my rights to choose my profession.”

# ARIZONA

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## **Lain Ehmman**

Communications Consultant and Writer

“Over the past 20 years, I’ve worked as an independent contractor. It allowed me to stay at home and raise my children while also contributing to my family’s income. I created my own business to suit my wants and my family’s needs, taking time off as needed to attend school events, stay home with sick children, travel, and more. My income far surpasses that which I could achieve were I to be a regular W2 employee. Let me live the way I see fit.”

## **Adriana McGinnis**

Legal & ID Theft Plans Sales Associate

“In addition to working for Legal Shield, I am an Uber/Lyft Driver. I am on Social Security, having worked for 45 years and I enjoy being my own Boss.”

## **Tim Mrva**

Web Designer

“I work a day job, but I also do freelance web design and database work to provide for my family. If I were no longer able to function as a contract laborer, I would lose my clients because then they might have to provide me benefits and withhold taxes, thereby pricing my services out of the market. This proposed law is an ill-conceived and unnecessary intrusion on the liberty of independent contractors all over the USA.”

## **Fran Rapacz**

Sales

“I have sold for 11 yrs as an independent contractor. This allows me freedom to choose which installers I can use instead of having to use one employer.”

## **John Rapacz**

Solar Sales

“9 yrs as independent contractor and paying my taxes. Paid on a 1099 NEC. I have the flexibility to use multiple companies for my installs and warranty work.”

## **Sue Ritter**

Consultant

“I am 67 years old and I work how I want, when I want and with whom I want. I am not ready to simply retire. The PRO Act will force me to retire because I know I will not be able to be hired as a full-time employee at my age or my previous pay level.”

# **ARKANSAS**

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## **Michael Vogelsong**

Independent Contractor

“We cannot let this opportunity for a decent income as independent contractors go away.”

# **CALIFORNIA**

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## **Judy Clouch Miyakawa**

Designer

“I make and design jewelry pieces. Some days I cannot do much due to my bent spine and arthritic hands. Being independent allows me this freedom to choose when and how to work.”

## **Jay Elliott**

Marketing Communications Consultant

“I have been a self-employed marketing communications consultant in San Francisco for nearly 30 years. California’s AB5 and ABC laws interfere with freelancers’ ability to make a living on our own terms. Not everyone aspires to work for someone else or finds a regular 9-to-5 paycheck fulfilling.”

## **Shereen Jarrett**

Edu Admin., Curriculum Development, Dancer, Choreographer

“The contractor employee laws do not work for the field of education! In order to be able to retain their own rights to their creations, and use the curriculum they develop at other programs, curriculum developers need to be “independent contractors”. There’s no benefit to being classified as a part-time employee, yet many drawbacks. As a professional dance performer, teacher and choreographer, we run into the same issues around intellectual property. Sometimes within a dance company, as performers, we become the subject matter itself. It’s very complicated. Over the last 20 years, the contractor vs employee issue has gone more and more in the direction of disadvantaging smaller nonprofits, schools, programs, organizations, etc, and fields like education and arts have been heavily impacted.”

## **Willa Joslin**

Face Painter & Tattoo Artist

“I would be unable to provide services due to AB5 restriction, but I need to remain an independent contractor due to physical limitations, multiple clients and transportation.”

# **COLORADO**

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## **Karen Anthony**

Professional Services

“I have worked as an independent contractor for 25 years as a pathologist, and it has provided me the flexibility to work as much or as little as I please, and to find the best deals for myself in terms of insurance and other costs. Please do not let this bill pass and place the many independent contractors who prefer the arrangement (which most do in my experience).”

## **Greg Bruce**

Consultant

“I am hired by large firms which are merging and mandated by the FTC to divest assets that if retained would constitute a monopoly. I report to the FTC, get paid by the merging entity to ensure they follow the FTC Order, and help create a competitor by assisting the Buyer of the divested assets to assimilate them into their organization.”

## **Mary Courtright**

Accountant

“I am retired but I do bookkeeping for 2 very small companies. It is a wonderful chance for me to make a little extra money and have flexibility. Good for the businesses, since they do not have to be concerned with payroll for 1 employee. I report ALL of my income through a business account and I file a Schedule C each year. So I am paying taxes. This new act will destroy small businesses!”

## **Edd Nichols**

Music Education Administrator

“We’re a very small company that employs teachers to teach various 1 hour to 1 1/2 hour courses to adult students. We charge student fees to generate the income to pay these instructors. These instructors are all independent contractors. If we had to do withholding and our taxes and fees from these instructors we would have to hire a bookkeeper or accountant at least part time. This would necessitate raising fees to members which some would not be able to afford and would then have to drop out. We would also be forced to consolidate courses and hire fewer instructors.”

## **Sheryle Price**

Merchandiser

“I have been an independent contractor for a number of years. I love it because of the freedom to work when and where I want (I worked for several companies). I was able to go on field trips with the kids and rearrange my schedule as I saw fit. It is great for mothers with young children.”

## **RoyLyn Sheesley**

Driver

“Being an independent contractor means I get to be at every event important to my family, which is important to me. It also means I can work anytime I have nothing better to do and it means I have more control over what I make. When I was raising my children it was the only thing that made it so I could raise them and have what we needed. This allowed us vacations, we could have not had at a job. I could work for 2 weeks, make what I needed for the month and take the rest of the month off. You can not do that with a job.”

## **Lara Sheets**

Speech Pathologist

“I have been a piano teacher and keyboard performer with my own home-based piano studio. I perform at weddings, funerals, and dinner music. This piano teaching and keyboard performance served my family well, as it allowed me the flexibility to arrange teaching hours and performance to care for our young children while supplying additional income for our growing family. American citizens demand the liberty and freedom to be able to provide needed goods and services with the flexibility of schedules, place and manner of delivery.”

## **Rodney Ulferts**

Truck Operator

“I own a tandem dump truck and haul aggregates for others.”

## **Laura Wycaver**

Real Estate Agent

“Being an Independent Contractor empowers me to provide the high level of service to my clients that my previous career prohibited. I can plan my work to the benefit of my clients instead of my employer.”

## **DELAWARE**

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### **Kim Hoey**

Freelance Writer, Delaware

“As a freelance writer I am able to work very flexible hours which is great, since my first job is as a mother. It allows me to work for different publications, even those that are in competing markets at the same time and it allows me to shop ideas around for the best fit and best pay. It is a job I love and have been doing for more than 20 years. Working for a single company would mean I miss MANY opportunities and would seriously stifle my income. Please don't limit my options.”

## **FLORIDA**

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### **Leslie Allen**

Charter Boat Captain

“For 35 years, my husband was a Charter Boat Captain. It's a tourist driven industry, so in the summer & fall, being an independent contractor meant, if the boat wasn't booked, he could go shrimping, bait fishing, or sponging, to bring in a little money so my family could pay the bills. If he were forced to be a full-time employee instead, no boat could stay in business because without trips in summer and fall, the owner couldn't afford to pay employees, licensing fees, upkeep, repairs, and the constant outflow of money and bills a charter boat incurs.”

### **Carol Castagna**

Writer

“As a freelance writer, and as years go by, I would be negatively affected by a curtailment of freedoms associated with the flexibility of freelancing that writers have known for decades. Government regulations would stifle my freedom to negotiate contracts and work the hours I would need to work because of my current retirement status.”

### **Miyra Ann Ison**

Real Estate Appraiser

“After a workplace permanent injury I passed Florida's requirements for a Real Estate Appraiser License. This Independence allowed me to work around my injuries. That worked well for over 20 years.”

## **Jennifer O'Brien**

Independent Contractor

“As a Navy wife for 23 years and the mother of five boys, being an Independent Contractor has allowed me to utilize my college degree as well as vast experience and knowledge while maintaining my desire to keep my family responsibilities a priority.”

## **Mary Rose**

ESOL Teacher

“I love working part time as an ESOL (English as a Second Language) teacher. I can choose my part time or full time hours and open whichever time slots I like. This frees up my time to pursue painting which is what I truly love to do. If I had to work full time, I would never have time to enjoy my life.”

## **Jill Schifferli**

Rental Apartment Manager

“My husband and I own our own business, buying and managing rental apartments. I manage the financial end of the business, which allowed me the flexibility to spend time with our children and volunteer in their schools when they were younger.”

## **Terri Storm**

E-rate Consultant

“I began working with e-rate applicants in 1997 when the program began. If this passes then I will be an employee in 17 different states and countless municipalities. My tax liabilities would not be worth me continuing to help schools/libraries secure funding for internet access and infrastructure.”

## **Williams Woodington**

Realtor/Repair Fix-It All

“Being independent means the more you work the more you make. You are in charge of you and where you go you control.”

# **GEORGIA**

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## **Tara Ballard**

Live Captioning for Deaf and Hard of Hearing

“I am a 21 yr Lupus Survivor. My illness makes me a liability to companies if I work full time because I miss so many days for hospitalizations, appointments, etc. But being an IC allows me the freedom to pick and choose my schedule. It puts me in control of how much money I make. It also keeps me OFF DIability and independent of gov't care and insurance. I have pride and pay for my own private insurance out of pocket because my income is so much higher as an IC. I can also afford to pay for my mental health services which are critical when dealing with chronic illness. If you pass this law I will lose my contract providing communication access to Deaf and Hard of Hearing populations. This bill would hurt the government in terms of putting me on disability and others like me.”





## **Katherine Markham**

Consultant

“I do contracting/independent work so that I can care for my 100% disabled son. Usually when he is well enough, I work. When his illness rages, he has my full time attention.

I have worked this way for over 20 years.”

## **Samone Pittman**

Actress/Dancer

“I do freelance work that I hope develops into a career as a performer. I worked as an independent contractor for the past two years at a dance studio. The flexible work allows me to follow my dreams and be the unique person that I am. 9-5 is death for some of us. So if you are looking to kill the spirit of individuality, sure go ahead and pass the PRO Act”

## **Terri Tucker**

Account Executive for Promotional Products Company

“30 years ago I had my first child and decided I wanted to stay at home to raise my children. My previous career as a travel agent gave me the opportunity to work from home as an independent contractor. This ultimately morphed into a career in the promotional advertising industry where I sold logo merchandise and gifts to (primarily) the travel industry. This was not a 9-5 job and gave me the flexibility to be there for my children but also have a lucrative career. I honestly don't know what I would have done if I didn't have this flexibility for my family.”

## **Dessa Vanschuyver**

Court Reporter

“As a rule, IC court reporters are not salaried employees. We get paid for the jobs we cover. No jobs, no pay. It's like being paid a commission. As a freelance reporter, I rove between different court reporting firms according to their needs. This is how many court reporters work. When one firm is slow, I pick up work from another firm. If I am forced - by this law - to become an employee, how do I earn money when the firm doesn't have a job for me to cover? How I choose to work should be my choice and not a government mandate.”

# **HAWAII**

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## **Stan Dunn**

Real Estate Agent

“As an independent contractor in real estate sales it gives me the freedom to be my own boss, to work my own hours.”

## IDAHO

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### **Bobbi Hoene**

Mortgage Banker, Idaho

“Being an independent contractor allows you the freedom to work the hours that work for your schedule, it also allows you to work ALL the hours you want to advance your career. I started in Mortgage Lending when we were considered independent contractors. I worked day and night for 3 years. Working independently allowed me the flexibility to raise my kids. “

## ILLINOIS

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### **Cindy Jenkins**

CART/ Broadcast Captioner

“In 2000 my career took a turn into captioning and I left the reporting field. I enjoyed helping consumers who were late-deafened, deaf, or hard-of-hearing being able to attend and participate in meetings. Not everyone who has hearing difficulties use/know sign language and captioning is their means of communication. Being able to have ICs who want to work different times of the day and night and weekends is huge to the success of these businesses AND the deaf/hoh community. Every worker should have the right to choose if they want to be an employee or an IC. America is about freedom and choices and the concept that one size fits all does not fit in the USA.”

### **S. Metcalf**

Computer Programmer

“When I was let go by my employer, I went into business for myself. That was over 20 years ago, and I am much happier.”

### **Joe Mocerri**

Computer Consultant

“I’ve been an independent contractor for the past 21 years. My skills are in high enough demand that I have been active for that time. However, if businesses are not allowed to use independent contractors, I will lose my ability to do what I do. No individual business is able to pay me for my time because they don’t have enough work to keep me busy. I work with dozens of businesses performing services they can’t do internally without having to hire someone.”

### **Jennifer Murtoff**

Editor, Writer, Translator, Chicken Consultant, Musician

“I’m a polymath, a person with many different interests who makes connections across disciplines. I got a job working as an editor, but the tedium and routine of working a desk job taxed me, sucked the life out of me. I crave variety; I crave learning. To fill those drives, I finally stepped off the boat in 2006 as a full-time freelancer. I’ve never looked back. This path is not an easy one. The astronomical

cost of health insurance and health care looms large. Not knowing what my next gig will be also is a scary factor. But I can pick and choose when, where, for whom, and how I do my work, as well as the projects and subjects I work on. I am much happier working in gig economy, despite the uncertainty. I want to be able to maintain the freedom to work in the manner I choose to.”

### **Judson Synnott**

Executive Consultant

“This has been my primary source of income for 15 years!”

### **Lynn Wilson**

Carpenter

“I have been an independent contractor since 1996. I am a small business, government interference and regulation will decimate the economy as well as lives.”

## **INDIANA**

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### **Donald Congleton**

Contract IT Specialist

“Working this way gives me freedom. I know how it works and accept it.”

### **Ron Jarrett**

Consulting

“I’m retired for 12 years, but earn a nice income, before Covid, as a part time business consultant and trainer.”

### **Andrea Kensill**

Dog Groomer

“I offer in home dog grooming for seniors who are unable to transport their pets to a grooming facility.”

## **KANSAS**

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### **Adrienne Foster**

Contractor

“I have always had an opportunity to be an independent contractor when not working in government. I want my freedom to choose to work for myself or someone else.”

## **Mark Lamendola**

Business Owner

“Two independent contractors work for my company. Both have to support their families, and are able to do that because they earn enough through their work for my company. I hired them as contractors after their W-2 jobs became untenable. So if I had to convert these two people to a W-2, I would need to terminate one of them and reduce the pay of the other. That would mean shrinking my business to the point where it can’t even sustain me. That means instead of three people productively contributing to society, paying taxes, and having fulfilling work, we would all three need to live on welfare, resort to criminal means of making money, or die from starvation and exposure. I’ve been in business since 1997. The business has survived much, but there is no way it can survive this particular threat.”

## **KENTUCKY**

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### **Ashley Combs**

Online ESL teacher

“I have been working from home as an online ESL teacher for several years. This job is vital because I can stay home with my daughter.”

### **Lauren Johnson**

Ghostwriter

“I am now working my dream job. Working for myself and authors around the world on my time as an independent contractor is my happy place. I could never go back!”

## **LOUISIANA**

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### **Fawn Blohm**

Equine Specialist in Mental Health Field & Self-Defense Instructor

“I am an independent contractor by choice. I need the flexibility to make my own hours in order to care for my family and elderly relatives. The freedom to choose who I work for, when and for how much as determined by me is paramount. I do not need or want the government to “protect” me.”

## MAINE

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### Wayne Ciuulo

Accountant

“I have been a self employed accountant for the last 35 years, I like being my own boss and setting the independent pace at which I work. This entrepreneurial spirit is why I can continue to work at whatever level I choose during my retirement years.”

## MARYLAND

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### Manda Ervin

Writer

“I am an immigrant who fled from dictators, I know how they intimidate, take over your individualism, human dignity, independence, life and society. I never thought they would take over my beloved USA, where I took refuge in her open free arms. Please fight back for America, I do not have a podium, but I am fighting as hard as I can.”

## MASSACHUSETTS

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### Paige Cerulli

Freelance Writer

“Over the past decade, I’ve built my freelance writing business into a full-time profession, leaving my full-time job last March. In doing so, I more than tripled my income and increased my financial stability. That could all change thanks to laws like AB5 and the PROAct. The PRO Act would destroy my business and my only source of income. I’m also a woman with a chronic illness, so many traditional employment opportunities are impractical or even dangerous for me. In truth, as a freelancer I have more control over my rates, my clients, and my career than I ever did as an employee. I wouldn’t trade this life for anything, but thanks to these laws, I might have to.”

### Mari Dia

Independent Contractor, Delivery Gig, Economy Driver & Aspiring Virtual Assistant

“I am presently a proud independent contractor—food delivery driver; known as App gig worker [by choice], after quitting my last toxic W2 employer that gave me huge amounts of stress and more anxiety than I can’t ever remember. These regular traditional jobs were destroying my self-confidence, mental and physical health. I can now juggle around with my flexible schedule, go to doctors and mechanic appointments, exercise every day, take courses and cook healthy homemade meals; which I never did with my W2 schedule.”

# MICHIGAN

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## **Susan Golinske**

Insurance Producer

“I work independently out of a corporate environment, and have a 99 year old parent for whom I am responsible. I could not take care of her if I wasn’t independent.”

## **Patrick Looney**

Concept Design Engineer

“I propose and provide independent designs for technology and prototype products on a job by job basis, frequently on a percentage of sale finished product basis. This legislation effectively puts me out of business.”

## **Anita McKeith**

Photographer

“I’ve been a freelancer for many years. Leaving the corporate world, where I was a photographer, to be a mom and do side gigs when I could. Now that my children are adults, I can’t imagine doing the 9-5, and I know so many other creatives that have said they could never go back to that lifestyle. As a photographer if you shoot when the light is good or when the timing depicts it, you’ll get the best image and I am happy doing life like that.”

# MISSOURI

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## **Margie Anglen**

Farmer

“As a farmer, we hire independent contractors a lot for various jobs. So anything that would make it easier, not harder to support and hire independent contractors has my vote!”

## **Tara Broadway**

Graphic Designer

“Being an independent contractor allows me to work from home, contribute to our family income and be here for my kids! Taking that income away from us would drive my family into poverty.”

## **Sandra Rees**

Proofreader

“I am about to turn 76 years old. I cannot find regular employment at my age, but as a proofreader, I don’t need to. I can take on clients for small or large jobs as they need. I worked as a full-time proofreader until 2010 when the sudden economic downturn forced many businesses to downsize. My husband and I (he is a typesetter) were among those let go by our small publishing company. Since I





was about to turn 65, I decided I would spend a year trying to find a job (which seemed unlikely given my age and the economic situation at the time), and then would go on Social Security. Given those circumstances, my husband and I began a small business of providing proofreading and typesetting on a contract basis. Being able to supplement our Social Security payments with “gig” work has been a real godsend for our economic stability. There is no way we could get full time jobs at our age doing what we do.”

## NEVADA

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### **Crystina Scott**

Business Owner

“We dispatch interpreting services for the deaf and hard of hearing. There are approximately 200 independent contractors who work with us.”

## NEW JERSEY

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### **Elizabeth Bristow**

Physical Therapist

“I have worked as an independent contractor for the past 16 years. I was able to make my own schedule around my family responsibilities. The flexibility has allowed me to stay in the workforce.”

### **Debra Card**

Real Estate Agent

“I have been a real estate agent for 23 years. I have worked my hours around raising my family and provided supplemental income to our household. I pay my taxes quarterly and have enjoyed the flexibility of working when I can and want.”

### **Jennifer Digney**

Occupational Therapist

New Jersey “As an OT and working mom the ability to work as an independent contractor for the last 20 years has been invaluable in allowing me the flexibility to work on a schedule that benefits my family. Losing the ability to work this way would be very detrimental to my family both financially and practically.”

### **Michael Mudrak**

Driver

“Beginning last year I opted to control my destiny and become a Door Dash delivery driver. I feel like I am back in control of my schedule. I work when I choose to. I also am getting to the gym on a regular basis now. Overall my quality of life is so much better.”

## **Linda Vassallo**

Small Business Owner

“I run a small bakery business out of a rental kitchen, doing what I love. I love to work and make people happy. I sometimes have to work 12 hours, but I answer to myself. I worked hard to get here. I just need a little help with a loan in order to open a storefront, but to take this away from me when I worked all my life to make money would be devastating.”

## **NEW MEXICO**

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### **Pattie Alexander**

Bookkeeper

“I started my business in 2012 to supplement my income. As time went on, people I worked for kept retiring or lowering my hours. It got more difficult to keep looking for work--so I decided to make my business my full time job. It also makes it easier now that I am having to take care of my aging mother as well. I have been fully self employed since February 2020 and am loving that I am independent of dealing with employers and being discriminated against due to my age. This way, I am my own boss and my clients know that I am dependent and reliable.”

### **Jeremy Ortiz**

Architect

“I started my business in 2010 coming out of the economic housing crash. I was fired with nowhere to go. I worked tirelessly for long hours to build up my cash flow, dig myself out of debt, and to forge a new path. That is part of the American Dream!”

## **NEW YORK**

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### **Cynthia Matthews**

In-Home Care Worker

“For most of my adult life I have been a stay-at-home and homeschool mom to 4 girls. When my youngest daughter started going to the local public school this school year, I decided I should get a job. Since I work independently, I can let families with whom I work know what hours I am available and work around my daughters’ schedules. I can work while they’re at school or during “zoom” school, and I can be home when they need me for help with homework. Being an independent contractor is the only way I could make it work for our family.”

# NORTH CAROLINA

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## **Carol Brammer**

Flooring Sales

“My business allows flooring manufacturers to sell directly to retail stores through us, cutting out the distributor and reducing costs for stores and their customers who purchase the flooring. We created this business after the housing crash of 2007 and developed a way to bring in income for ourselves as well as help make small flooring stores viable again. If we were no longer allowed to be independent contractors, there would be no value in our service to manufacturers and my company would collapse.”

## **Kathrine Cook**

Residential Specialty Contractor

“My husband and I have been in construction since 1997 as independent contractors. He takes on the small jobs that the big contractors won’t take because there is no big profit to be made. Should a law such as what is being suggested be enacted, people like my husband will be subsequently placed out of work. This bill only benefits big corporations that will be allotted tax breaks and governmental benefits. The small guy and the home owners will end up paying the penalty.”

The flexibility of being an independent contractor is so important to me. Before COVID it allowed me to set a schedule that gave me the freedom to attend my son’s soccer games and my daughter’s field trips. During COVID it allowed me to continue working while my kids schooled at home. Most recently, the flexibility of being an independent contractor allowed me to schedule my work around caring for my dad, who passed away recently. And in the future, being an independent contractor will allow me to care for my elderly mother when the time comes.

For me, the flexibility of being an independent contractor is far more important than the benefits of being a full time employee. Being an independent contractor has allowed me to support my family while being there for them, in person, whenever I need to be.”

## **Rebecca Lipka**

Pampered Chef Consultant

“I work part time as a receptionist and make up the rest of my salary with my side gig as a Pampered Chef Consultant. My part time job is so I can be home before and after school for my kids, I work my PC job when my husband is home and can watch the kids. This would take away my freedom to parent my children, I don’t want latch key kids.”

## **Karen Nilsen**

Author

“From earliest memory, I have told myself stories at night to help ease my chronic insomnia. Eventually, I started writing these stories down and dreamed of becoming a full-time author. My parents inspired me with their examples of being self-employed artists. In the 1990s, artists could actually earn a living in the area where I live, which is not really the case now. It was often feast or famine and involved hard

work, but the independence and ability to earn a living from creating art was well worth the struggle and sacrifice. I currently write and publish fantasy novels--I have done this since 2010. I have also done some independent contractor work as an office assistant to supplement my book sale income. Right now, I have two part-time jobs (W-2s from both) aside from my writing, one at a domestic violence shelter/crisis line and the other as an office assistant at a privately owned therapeutic program. Neither of these jobs provide healthcare benefits, and I prefer it that way.”

## **OHIO**

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### **Roxanna Demoss**

Hospital Patient Access Director

“I retired from fulltime work in 2016. I continued to use my skill as a self employed contract worker. I was asked to use my skills at a hospital and gave them my going rate. They refused to pay me on contract and insisted on putting me on their payroll. This job was out of town so I had travel expenses, i.e. hotel, food and cost of transportation. As a contract employee I was able to deduct those expenses on my income taxes. However, as a hospital employee I could NOT deduct any expense. So in the grand scheme of things, I lost money because I was a permanent employee instead of a contract worker.”

## **OKLAHOMA**

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### **Edward Ladner**

Actor, Writer, Producer

“I am a freelance creative actor, VO-artist, narrator, writer, producer who lives in Tulsa, OK. The very nature of the creative realms of media, advertising film/TV production calls for indie-contractors.”

## **OREGON**

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### **Dave Aikins**

Field Engineering Tech

“As an independent contractor, not under any OSHA regulation, I can do jobs which cannot be done by anyone but an independent contractor to those businesses.”

### **Hannah Childs**

Voiceover Actor

“I have a recording studio in my home. My agent sends me casting calls to be the voice in a TV, radio or internet ad where I am telling about a product or service. Because I can set my schedule and

choose when I want to work and what jobs I want to audition for, I can make some income while being home for my family. No one is forcing me to work as an independent contractor--in fact it's my choice and my preference. It affords me opportunities I would not otherwise have. Many years ago, actors fought hard to not be employees of the old studio system, and to have a say in what kind of work they do and when. Independent Contractor work might not be for everyone, yet it is essential to those who work creatively. We must retain the right to work on our own terms."

### **Lynnae McCoy**

ESL Tutor

"When my husband lost his job in 2016, we needed income. He was unable to find traditional employment, and we were barely making ends meet. In April 2017 I signed a contract to tutor English as a second language to kids in China. In short order I was able to replace my husband's lost income while still having the flexibility to care for my children.

## **PENNSYLVANIA**

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### **Loren Cribbs**

Marketing Consultant

"I've been laid off multiple times. One time it was due to Obamacare. My CEO said in a company meeting before the layoffs, 'it's great we get to give free healthcare to everyone, but it does come at a cost.' Our jobs were the cost. People should have a choice in how they work."

### **Theresa Potts**

Home Health Aide

"I worked many years as a subcontractor. I worked nights so I could be home to get my kids off to school, sleep while they were in school, and be home to have dinner with them and get them to bed. It paid well and I was still home for my family. I wouldn't have it any other way."

## **SOUTH CAROLINA**

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### **Shauna Argento**

Fitness Instructor

"I'm a part time fitness instructor with plans to support my retirement with this gig when I retire from a Fortune 6 company in 5 yrs."

### **Lise-Lotte Newell**

Owner of a Caroling Company

"I own a caroling company and all of our singers are independent contractors. They love having the choice of accepting a gig or not"

# TENNESSEE

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## **Paul Baioni**

Management & Accounting Services

“Capitalism is about free markets, businesses and workers alike.”

## **Rick Hendrix**

Driver

“Being an Independent means exactly what it says: I am only answerable to myself. If I wish to work, I do. I have the freedom to make my own decisions, where I go and when I work.”

## **Alisa Murphy**

Freelance Writer

“My first love is writing, but that just does not pay the bills...Yet! I have written and self-published two books and a load of articles over the last 15 years. I haven’t made it to the level that I can 9-5 it, but I can still dream and work hard toward that goal.”

# TEXAS

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## **Brian Enloe**

Producer, Announcer, Voice Talent, Live Streamer

“I am physically disabled, so I am unable to work a regular 9-5 job. Freelancing in the gig economy is the only way I am able to earn income on my own. If this Act becomes law, it could be disastrous to me and others in a similar position to mine.”

## **Daryl-Ann Heinrich**

Copyeditor

“I have two independent contractor jobs. The extra income I bring in allows us some flexibility in our budgeting and helps us with home projects, family vacations, and educational curriculum/materials/opportunities for our children. Plus, these jobs don’t take me away from my true work of raising and educating our kids and creating a home for our family.”

## **Michelle Orcutt**

Wealth Advisor

“From OCC Bank Examiner, the Bank Officer to employee status Wealth Advisor, I made the move to Independent in 2019 and it’s the best move of my career. Building my practice of service my way without the Wells Fargo style production quotas and incentives. Still must adhere to all laws and FINRA rulings and under annual audit and review, I now operate under 1099 NEC rules. Our entire





team moved over from Wells Fargo Advisors in 2019 to the Raymond James Independent platform - terrific company, ability to serve my clients without company interference, remain heavily regulated and supervised but free to operate my business, hire my team my way. Never been happier.”

### **Tina Orlowski**

Home Health Care Agency Owner

“We employ 25 1099 contract workers including nurses, therapists and nursing assistants. They all have the freedom to provide care to ill patients in our community for several different agencies by choice. This option works for them and us as we cannot formally employ all of them and offer benefits.”

### **Lisa Poe**

DTP & Graphic Artist

“I started freelancing in DC in 1994. We moved back to Texas in 1996 and I continued my business in Texas even though the bulk of my work is in the DC area. I like the fact I can pick and choose my clients and my timeframe to work. I was able to spend quality time with my mother when she moved in with us in 2018. Even though she passed away in 2020, those years will be treasured. If I had been forced to work a fulltime job, I wouldn’t have been able to provide the care and love to my mother. ”

## **UTAH**

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### **Cathy Wentz**

Independent Blogger

“I work as a public relations assistant for a local orthopaedic surgeon under an independent contracting arrangement, which is a great arrangement for me. My hours are mostly mine to choose, unless we have to agree on a time that works for us to meet, which is dependent on both our schedules. I have also worked in the independent contractor capacity on a platform created for independent contractors, and as a blogger for a nearby Direct Primary Care practice. None of us want our lives controlled by one employer. We are HAPPY with our flexibility.”

## **VIRGINIA**

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### **Wendell Brown**

Tax Accountant

“I have worked for over 20 years as an independent contractor doing tax accounting. I have helped numerous self-employed contractors with their taxes. They are dedicated to serving their customers, hard working, and the type of people Who Make America Great!”

## **Angela Helvey**

Delivery Driver

“The government is taking my right to work at a job that works for my family. If I wanted benefits, I would have looked for a job that had them”

## **Michael Helvey**

Military/Independent Contractor

“At a time in this country when things were looking grim and we were struggling financially, working as independent contractors to earn extra money saved our family. Now I’m able to continue saving towards my daughter’s education and continue working towards being debt free one day. Many others do this as a second job like me, and if I am not able to continue doing this work, it would be detrimental to our livelihood.”

## **Kim Sheard**

Pet Sitter

“My company uses independent contractors to walk clients’ dogs and otherwise care for their pets. This is supplemental income for the sitters, many of whom are retirees. They do not need for the company to provide them with health care or other benefits. They just enjoy the work and the extra cash, plus the freedom to work when and however much they like.”

## **Christine Vicari**

Court Reporter

“I’ve been a freelancer for 8 years and I love the flexibility. My kids were not small, so the timing was great. Spent many years 9-5 behind a desk in an office environment and when I started my life as a freelancer, it was a cathartic life changing event for the better in my life. I LOVE IT!”

## **Jamie Wilson**

Writer/Editor

“As a military spouse, I found that moving a lot does not help you build a career in most fields, including mine. I also found a significant amount of reluctance in employers to hire someone whose experience was from a good distance away and who would certainly leave their employment within three years. Thankfully, I also found gig work online that I could do anytime, anywhere, and as much or little as I wanted. Perhaps my life doesn’t seem important to politicians and bureaucrats, but remember: spousal happiness has enormous bearing on military retention and morale, and I am far from the only military spouse grateful for the freedom of the gig economy.”

## **Kate Zickel**

Digital Marketing Contractor

“I started my business because I believe in connecting directly with my clients. Because of independent contracting, I have the freedom and flexibility to do what I love and expand my skill set. Government regulations like California’s AB5 threaten my livelihood and the business I’ve worked so hard to build. Lawmakers should be supporting me and other American entrepreneurs in our efforts to design the professional life we desire, rather than limiting our ability to grow.”

## WASHINGTON

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### Jane Fore

Physician

“As a physician I was in an independent practice with 2 other physicians. I then was an independent contractor for another hospital program after leaving private practice. Being an independent contractor leaves me independent to do as I believe is the best for the patient and not just follow the directive of the hospital administration.”

### Janey Muller

Barista & Uber Driver

“My husband retired and started driving for Uber and Lyft. I worked part time nights as a barista. We were able to work on the days we wanted and take days off as needed. We had a lot of freedom. Both jobs supplemented our retirement income.”

### Tracy Zoller

Fishing Guide

“I have been self-employed for over 40 years. As an independent business person, I have always understood that I am responsible for myself and never wanted to draw from social or government benefits to fund my life. One size does not fit all in real life.”

## WASHINGTON, D.C.

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### Shana Gaaney

Healthcare IT Consultant

“Starting my small business as an S Corporation in 2012 was one of the best decisions I’ve ever made. I get to choose the clients and projects that I want, set my rate, select the terms of my Solo 401K, and match my employee contribution up to 25% of my W2 pay. I can choose the high deductible health plan and HSA that best suit my needs, choose where I live and work, and take my vacations without regard to a company’s vacation limits. This flexibility fits the lifestyle I’ve built for myself, and it would be devastating to have it taken away.”

## WEST VIRGINIA

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### Jennifer Glade

Interior Design Studio Manager

“It is vital to protect independent contractors! I am the mother of six and need the flexibility of contract work!”

## WISCONSIN

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### **April Sepich**

Independent Art Fair Fine Artist

“I earn my living from participating in juried art fairs all throughout the Midwest. I work for no one but myself. I chose this type of employment because it suits my talents and my lifestyle. If I wanted to be an employee, working for someone else, I would have a 9-5 job. I am the only boss I answer to.”

### **Elizabeth Thelen**

Coach/Speaker

“As I was raising 2 babies, I have been a part-time employee and IC for the last 15. Great flexibility and I have hired other ICs. I plan to continue and grow!”

## WYOMING

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### **Erin Murray**

Brand Strategist

“I am a 19-year military spouse. I have strived tirelessly to maintain employment over the last two decades having moved nine times while raising two children, and being a “single parent” during four deployments. As you can imagine, maintaining a career under these conditions is daunting at best; turning to freelance and independent contract work has allowed me to remain outside of the high 22% unemployment rate amongst my peers. The PRO Act 2021, or Protecting the Right to Organize Act, recently passed in the House, but the bill is Anti-Small Business and Anti-Military. According to the 2019 Blue Star Families Survey -- which provides a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and challenges encountered by military families -- nearly 48% of military spouses are self-employed, business owners, or are at least interested in entrepreneurship. When it comes to how this will affect military spouses, the CEO of Freedom Learning Group, Elizabeth O’Brian said it best, “The PRO Act will have a significant [negative] impact on military spouses, a population that is 92% female, if they lose the opportunity to pursue project-based work. We cannot afford to deny the paths of economic opportunity to a population that is dependent upon that flexibility.”

 **Independent**<sup>®</sup>  
Women's Forum

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[iwf.org/independent-contractor-stories](https://iwf.org/independent-contractor-stories)

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