



To: Interested Parties

From: Mitch Markel, Benenson Strategy Group
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Date: August 25, 2020

Re: Findings from our recent survey of likely 2020 Voters and app-based Drivers

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About the Survey

[Uber has proposed changes to state laws to give app-based Drivers benefits and protections](#) along with a number of corporate commitments to improve the quality of independent work. Uber engaged two independent and well respected research firms, Democratic-leaning Benenson Strategy Group and Republican-leaning GS Strategy Group to come together in a bi-partisan independent research project to explore the needs and concerns of app-based Drivers, their attitudes about Uber's proposal, as well as the voter perspective on the issue.

Methodology

Between July 10-July 18, 2020, Benenson Strategy Group and GS Strategy Group conducted online interviews among 1,002 Drivers with Uber in the U.S. (MoE \pm 3%), defined as those 18 years or older who had driven with Uber or Uber Eats in the past year, and 1,301 Likely Voters (MoE \pm 2.6%), defined as registered voters 18 years or older who say they are likely to vote in 2020.

Key Findings

Drivers and Voters overwhelmingly support Uber's new Independent Contractor (IC) plan described below that allows Drivers to continue to work as Independent Contractors, maintaining the flexibility and freedom of working independently, **but gives them access to benefits** that today are only available to employees under existing labor laws.

- ❖ **82% of Drivers support this plan**, which offers access to certain benefits, while prioritizing the flexibility that brings them to independent work. 88% of Drivers agree that this plan would benefit them (40% strongly agree).
- ❖ **Voters overwhelmingly support the policy plan and it is broadly supported across party and geographical lines. 3 in 4 (76%) Voters support the plan, including:** 78% of Democrats, 75% of Republicans, and 74% of Independents; 72% in the Northeast, 76% in the Midwest, 75% in the South, and 79% in the West; 74% of those in battleground states.

Plan description shown to Drivers and Voters: This plan would combine the flexibility of Independent Contractor status with some benefits and protections typically associated with being an employee. This plan would not make Drivers employees, and therefore they would not be entitled to all the benefits and protections of employment, but they would receive more benefits than they currently receive as an independent contractor.

If given the choice, Drivers overwhelmingly prefer to get benefits with IC status over receiving benefits through employment. They do not just prefer IC status, traditional employment is incompatible with the way these workers utilize this earning opportunity.

- ❖ When presented with 3 options - employment, current IC status, or a plan to maintain the flexibility of IC status with access to certain benefits - 85% of Drivers chose the plan or the status quo, with only 15% opting for employment.

This proposed plan to enhance IC status is a better alternative than either of the options currently available to Drivers.

- ❖ 89% of Drivers agree this plan is a better alternative than forcing Drivers to be employees, and 82% agree it is a better alternative than remaining ICs without benefits.
- ❖ Similarly, 84% of Voters agree this plan is a better alternative than forced employment, and 85% agree it is a better alternative than the current IC status without benefits and protections.

While this plan may not be a cornerstone issue for politicians, their position on this matter does have sway for Voters, and Drivers and Voters believe that both companies and the government should play a role in shaping this plan.

- ❖ 77% of Drivers are more likely to vote for a representative that supports this plan, while 85% are less likely to vote for someone who blocks it.
 - Drivers believe corporations and the government both have a responsibility to modernize the employment system. 88% of Drivers believe the government should remove barriers preventing Drivers from receiving benefits while they are independent contractors, and 86% believe rideshare and delivery companies should work to remove these barriers.
- ❖ 79% of Voters are more likely to vote for a representative that supports this plan, while 71% are less likely to vote for someone who blocks it. Independent Voters are most influenced, with 84% more likely to vote for a representative that supports this plan, and 77% less likely to vote for someone who blocks it.
 - 82% of Voters agree that rideshare and delivery companies need to step up and change the employment system so gig workers are better protected. Voters also believe that the government should remove barriers to enacting this plan (81%) and that the plan should be encouraged by the government (78%).
- ❖ Similarly, in 2020 battleground states, 79% of Voters are more likely to vote for a representative that supports this plan, and 70% are less likely to vote for someone who blocks it.

Setting the Stage

When given the choice of being an IC or employee, the vast majority of Drivers prefer to maintain their IC status--69% of all Drivers and 66% of Drivers identifying as full-time prefer to be classified as an independent contractor rather than an employee.

- ❖ In fact, when given the choice between “receiving benefits the employees typically receive like health insurance, workers’ compensation, and paid time off” and “being able to maintain schedule flexibility like being able to drive when and where you want,” **77% of Drivers say flexibility is more important than receiving benefits. In other words, Drivers prefer flexibility over the benefits of employment by more than 3-to-1.**

Drivers are not looking for a “9-to-5” job; the flexibility of driving is a huge draw and rigid schedule and structure doesn’t work for them. 86% of Drivers say a reason they chose app-based driving was to have flexibility in their schedule (71% say this was a *major* reason) and 86% of Drivers agree that they would no longer be able to drive if it didn’t offer a flexible schedule.

- ❖ 80% of Drivers say *the ability to schedule their work around their family, health, or education needs* is a reason they choose to drive with rideshare or delivery apps.
- ❖ Family obligations are important for a large proportion of Drivers: 36% of Drivers have children under the age of 18 and 22% are caregivers for another member of their family.

Drivers don’t just prefer IC status, **they need the flexibility in order to continue to earn.**

- ❖ When asked whether or not they would continue to drive if Drivers were reclassified as traditional employees, and would receive the benefits and protections of an employee, but had to work full-time hours on a set schedule, report to a boss, and abide by other rules set by the company, **70% of Drivers said they would not want to continue driving.**

Though Drivers prefer flexibility and Independent Contractor (IC) status, there is still a clear need to better protect these workers: 84% of Drivers wish they could retain flexibility in their schedule but receive more benefits, like some of the benefits traditional employees receive, from driving (52% strongly agree).

Important Driver Facts

Flexibility, freedom, and control are essential to Drivers.

- ❖ % of Drivers who say each is a major reason why they drive for rideshare/delivery companies:
 - 71% say *to have flexibility in my schedule*
 - 60% say *to be able to schedule my work around my family needs, health, other work, or education*
 - 55% say *to pay for my basic needs like rent or food*
 - 51% say *to be my own boss*
 - 51% say *to control my own financial future*
- ❖ 69% of Drivers say they consider themselves a part-time driver, and only 19% say it is their only source of income.
- ❖ Just 34% of Uber Drivers work only with Uber or Uber Eats; the remaining 66% also drive with other app-based companies like Lyft, DoorDash, Grubhub, Instacart, or Amazon Flex.

Expanding options so ICs who do not currently have access to traditional employment benefits can choose benefits that work for them is important, though this isn’t the top priority for most Drivers.

- ❖ When provided with a list of current IC and employment benefits, elements that protect flexibility and freedom ranked as most essential for Drivers, like the freedom to schedule hours (73% say is essential) and the ability to take long absences without penalty (66% say is essential). More traditional benefits are second tier priorities, like occupational accident insurance (59% say is

essential), antidiscrimination and sexual harassment protection (59% say is essential) and a benefits fund (54% say is essential).

A one-size-fits-all benefits plan will not fit Drivers; the ability to choose what they need is a critical point for these workers.

- ❖ 75% of Drivers prefer a policy where Drivers can pick and choose which benefits they get, even if the total dollar amount provided is slightly lower, compared to a policy where all Drivers receive the same benefits and cannot choose, but the total dollar amount provided is slightly higher (25%).

Those who choose to drive for app-based rideshare and delivery companies are well-informed, both in their decision to work as ICs and as future voters seeking representation to make their Driver experiences better.

- ❖ Drivers are an educated and politically attuned group; 54% have at least a college degree, and 40% regularly discuss politics with family or friends.
- ❖ Politically, Drivers are fairly centrist; 45% consider themselves moderate, while 29% identify as liberal, and 26% as conservative.

Important Voter Facts

An enhanced IC classification aligns with Voter beliefs that the US employment system is in need of change.

- ❖ Only 1 in 4 Voters believe that the employment system in the US is working well for most workers
- ❖ 62% of Voters agree that we need to update our employment system to accommodate the gig economy; this number jumps to 74% among Democrats.

Americans are concerned about protections offered to gig economy workers with just 28% saying the current system protects gig workers. The coronavirus pandemic has shone a spotlight on existing problems and inequities, **mounting to widespread calls for change.**

- ❖ 86% of Voters agree that *the coronavirus pandemic has exposed flaws in our employment system and shows that we need to shift how we determine what kinds of workers receive benefits.*
- ❖ 80% of Voters agree that *it's not fair that we have an employment system in which some workers get benefits and protections, while others don't.*
- ❖ 75% of Voters agree that *the employment system is outdated and not adapted to the current workforce.*

Voters overwhelmingly support providing Drivers with certain benefits and protections.

- ❖ The vast majority of Voters not only support the general idea of updating the IC classification, but most, 79%, support providing occupational accident insurance and 78% support creating a benefits fund, key elements of Uber's plan for Drivers.
- ❖ Voters, however, also understand that only options that prioritize flexibility and freedom make sense for Drivers. 86% of Voters agree that it is important that any changes to app-based driving and delivering protect the schedule flexibility of Drivers.

Voters are keeping Driver needs and preferences in mind. They want to do right by these workers, and understand that changes to classification would impact Driver experience, so they want to listen to those with a stake in this fight.

- ❖ 88% of Voters agree the plan will benefit Drivers.
- ❖ 79% of Voters would be more likely to support the policy if a majority of Drivers supported it (note - 82% of Drivers support the plan).

[For full results of *Driver survey* click here](#)

[For full results of *Likely Voters survey* click here](#)

[For an *infographic of the data* click here](#)

About Benenson Strategy Group

From the war room to the board room, Benenson Strategy Group helps clients meet their challenges head on: from competitive threats to crisis management; from rebranding to building reputation and strengthening trust. From winning campaigns to growing market share.

BSG's clients include presidential candidates, international heads of state, and major issue-advocacy organizations. We were the leading pollster for President Barack Obama during the 2008 and 2012 elections. BSG has also guided many Fortune 100 companies through some of the most notable communications challenges in the past decade, including companies like Procter & Gamble, Campbell Soup Company, Weight Watchers, and Toyota.

About GS Strategy Group

GS Strategy Group clients benefit from our unique combination of expertise in public opinion and consumer behavior, and our extensive knowledge of regulated industries, the political process, and public policy making. We have leveraged our research, analytical, and communications skills to devise and execute successful public policy and marketing campaigns for some of the country's leading corporations and institutions.

GS Strategy Group team members have served as pollster and senior advisor in presidential, gubernatorial, and congressional campaigns across the country, including Senator John McCain's 2008 presidential bid, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie in his upset victory of 2009 and reelection in 2013, Illinois Senator Mark Kirk's victory in 2010, and Texas Senator John Cornyn's reelection in 2014. More recently, GSSG conducted polling and guided strategy on behalf of the National Republican Congressional Committee and the Congressional Leadership Fund.