

## **The United States Call Center Worker and Consumer Protection Act**

**H.R. 4603 / S. 2409**

Over the last several decades, many communities throughout the United States have been affected by the decimation of the manufacturing industry. In an effort to save their local economies, some communities offered large tax incentives to corporations to build call centers and provide good jobs for workers in their community. The average wage for a call center worker in 2021 was \$17.75 per hour, with union represented jobs providing even higher wages. However, with developments in telecommunications technology and a broken tax code, more and more call center operators are shutting down domestic operations and moving operations overseas where the local workforce faces horrific exploitation on the job, including poor safety and health standards, low wages, and violence for union organizing. Once again, communities are devastated with job losses and loss of financial investments, while multinational corporations pocket taxpayer dollars.

The offshoring of call center work has repercussions for American consumers. When call center work is offshored, they often move to countries where security measures to protect personal data are far less robust than those in the U.S. The weak consumer protections put American consumers at risk for identity theft, fraudulent transactions, and general mishandling of sensitive information. For example, the FCC levied a \$25 million fine against AT&T for consumer identity theft emerging from company call centers in Mexico, Colombia, and the Philippines, affecting 280,000 Americans.

The bipartisan ***U.S. Call Center Worker and Consumer Protection Act*** takes important steps to protect workers and consumers by deterring companies from offshoring call center work and incentivizing them to keep jobs in the U.S. Specifically, it would require:

- **Disclosure of call center location to U.S. consumers:** It would require the relocated overseas call center agent to disclose the physical location of their operation. For example, a customer may hear, "Hello, my name is Jane from Manila."
- **Right to transfer:** U.S. consumers would reserve the right to request the call be transferred to a customer service agent who is physically located in the U.S.
- **Create a 'bad actor' list of U.S. companies that make a practice of sending U.S. jobs overseas:** It would require a publicly available list, kept by the Department of Labor, of all employers that relocated entirely or a significant portion of their call center or customer service work overseas. These companies would be ineligible for federal grants or guaranteed loans. Preference will be given to U.S. employers that do not appear on the list for awarding civilian or defense-related contracts. Employers that relocate a call center will remain on the list for up to 5 years after each instance of relocating a call center.
- **List removal:** If a 'bad actor' relocates a call center into the U.S. (brings jobs back) they will be removed from the list.

The ***U.S. Call Center Worker and Consumer Protection Act*** was reintroduced by Reps. McKinley (R-WV), Pocan (D-WI), Smith (R-PA), and Davids (D-KS) and Sens. Casey (D-PA), Brown (D-OH) and Cortez Masto (D-NV). Cosponsor the ***U.S. Call Center Worker and Consumer Protection Act*** to ensure that taxpayer dollars are not rewarding companies that offshore their customer service work and give consumers the power to decide where their calls are handled.

