

The United States Call Center Worker and Consumer Protection Act

Why do we need the U.S. Call Center Worker and Consumer Protection Act?

Call centers employ workers throughout the United States and are significant contributors to the nation's economy. According to industry data, there are roughly 3.6 million call center positions across the country. In recent years, however, many call center operators have shifted operations overseas and shut down or downsized their U.S. operations at an alarming rate. Call center closures and downsizing have occurred in all regions and across industries, with significant losses occurring recently in the banking, finance and insurance sectors. These job losses have devastated communities that previously housed call centers while overseas call centers have flourished.

The United States Call Center Worker and Consumer Protection Act would work to reverse this trend by denying federal benefits to companies that ship call center jobs overseas.

What will the U.S. Call Center Worker and Consumer Protection Act do?

The bill would:

- Require businesses to notify the Department of Labor at least 120 days before relocating a call center overseas or contracting out call center work to another entity that relocates the work overseas. Violators are subject to fines of \$10,000 a day.
- Direct the Department of Labor to maintain a public list of employers that have relocated call center work overseas. Employers will remain on this list for five years unless they return an equal or greater number of call center jobs to the U.S. or amend the terms of their contract with the entity performing their call center work to require the work be done in the U.S.
- Make employers on this list ineligible for federal grants and federal guaranteed loans. Exceptions may be made for employers who show that lack of such a grant or loan would threaten national security, result in substantial job loss in the U.S. or harm the environment.
- Require agencies, including the Department of Defense, to give preference to U.S. employers that do not appear on the list when awarding federal contracts and require that all call center work performed on federal contracts be performed in the U.S.
- Require call center workers to disclose the physical location of the call center at the beginning of communications with customers and transfer communications to a call center located in the U.S. if a customer requests they do so.
- Require the Department of Labor to prepare a report on the amount and location of call center work being performed for the federal government.

The bill's requirements would apply to all businesses that employ 50 or more full-time employees or that employ 50 or more employees who in aggregate work at least 1,500 hours per week.