Protecting Call Center Workers and Consumers

Call centers are often the economic backbone of local economies, providing strong, middle class wages for workers. Developments in telecommunications technology and a broken tax code, however, have created incentives for corporations to move these jobs overseas. When these jobs are outsourced and offshored, communities across the country are devastated with losses in jobs and financial revenue, while corporate executives are able to pocket more profits and taxpayer money.

Companies that offshore call center work often move to countries where workers are exploited in modern day sweatshops and security measures to protect personal data are far less robust than those in the U.S. For example, Verizon has offshored customer service calls to numerous call centers in the Philippines, where workers are paid just $1.78 an hour and forced to work overtime without compensation. Further, 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.

There is a strong link between overseas call centers and security problems, which puts American consumers at risk for identity theft, fraudulent transactions, and general mishandling of sensitive information. U.S. taxpayer money should not be awarded to companies that make a practice of sending U.S. jobs overseas. This epidemic has resulted in greater job losses here in the U.S and the erosion of middle class communities while risking the data of millions of American consumers.

The ***Call Center Worker and Consumer Protection Act*** (**H.R. 3219**) takes important steps to address these issues and to protect workers and consumers. If passed this bill would accomplish the following:

- **Disclose 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 publically 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.