

Hello Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to listen to worker's voices today.

My name is Renaud, and I've been delivering food and stuff in Toronto on my bicycle since 2014. I started working part-time with a local Toronto company called JoeyCo, when I was a student, at the time. Not many people have heard of them, as their market share has long since been eclipsed by the giant foreign corporations that we all know: Uber, Doordash and Just Eat, which operates as Skip the Dishes in Canada.

I first joined UberEats in September 2018. I had recently quit my job and my younger brother referred me, telling me that he was making very good money part-time. I signed up, thinking that it could be a temporary bridge until I found a new job. I was amazed at how quick and frictionless the process was, and my account was activated within a couple days.

Instantly, I was hooked.

All I had to do was press the big blue GO button at the bottom of my screen and I could start earning money whenever I wanted, doing something that I actually liked doing (biking)

I quickly realized that the most lucrative times to work were the peak times, since that is when Uber set the highest incentives and bonuses.

Lunch (11am-2pm) and Dinner (5-9pm).

Since biking is quite tiring, I could only realistically work for 3-4 hours at a time, but if I worked hard during those times, I knew I could earn enough to support myself. I made it a goal to get out there every day I could, and sometimes twice a day.

In the spring of 2019, the UberEats app started being less busy, as less people ordered delivery and more people were willing to work to deliver. The incentives Uber was offering were dropped, so the value of orders started going down. Suddenly, there were some shifts where I was mostly just waiting for good orders.

So I thought "why not work on multiple apps?". This way I could minimize my time spent waiting around as I tried to find orders on multiple platforms. I signed up for Doordash first, then Skip the Dishes shortly afterwards.

Suddenly, I was on three apps and I could look for the best orders on any given day. With Doordash and Skip the Dishes, I had to submit my availability and schedule 3-4 hour shifts with them. I didn't like it, as I couldn't just instantly get online during the peak times when I wanted to be working. Doordash and Skip completely control the schedule, and you can only take the shifts they give you, or the shifts you manage to grab before anyone else does because someone dropped it. You can declare yourself as "available" but if you don't have a shift you will most likely not be able to earn.

By now, I hope you've realized the point I am trying to make here, and that is that I had already built my life around what the apps told me were the best time to work. I had a bit of free time in the morning prior to the lunch shift, then I could come home and rest up for a few hours before getting back on my bike for the dinner shift.

Does that sound flexible to you? The apps control the schedule, either through manipulation like Uber, where there are financial rewards and incentives to work at certain times, or explicitly

like Skip and Doordash do, by scheduling actual shifts where you are 100% expected to be at work for a set amount of time.

The apps narrative of flexibility is the flexibility to not make money, which for anyone who has rent and bills to pay, is obviously not flexibility at all. Being flexible to be online when it's best for the app but not being paid for the entire time I'm on shift is not flexibility.

We are not independent contractors. This is a narrative that the apps have been pushing since the beginning and as someone who has been doing this work for a few years, I can tell you it's a fiction. We are misclassified employees.

There are many expenses that we are responsible for and necessary to do this job, such as a smartphone, a cell plan, maintenance, technical clothing, etc. This all comes out of our wages and reduces our real income.

We are forced to work on two or even 3 apps because we are not getting paid to wait for orders. We have to find ways to be "engaged" and delivering if we want to earn. Apps can control our time and manipulate us by keeping us waiting, forcing us to accept bad orders.

This work is dangerous! For anyone here who has biked in Toronto, you know what I'm talking about. For the ones who haven't, maybe you should give it a try. If we do get hurt, we have no support from our employers, or the government, just the flexibility to not work and not make money. We deserve EI, CPP and WSIB!

The apps have all the control. We are at the mercy of their algorithms and their schedules, we can only say yes or no to the orders they decide to send us, without any idea if our choice will be held against us in the future (or not). They can fire us or drop our pay at anytime without warning or notice, they already have and will continue to do so! Bill 88 doesn't protect us from any of these things.

It's time to hold these companies accountable!

You have the power to end this charade and truly support workers. The ministry of labour's own investigation has already found that our relationship to Uber is that of an employer-employee. The provincial Liberals and the NDP have already announced that they support full employment rights for gig workers. In multiple countries around the world, courts have ruled that gig workers are employees. There is a class action lawsuit currently going on in Ontario.

The writing is on the wall. This bill doesn't work for workers.

You have a chance to be on the right side of history. Choose wisely.