

News

Economy

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study found that just 0.5 percent of workers engaged in online gig work in 2015.

A separate study by JP-Morgan Chase estimated that gig workers were leveling off at about 1 percent of the workforce in 2016.

More drivers, fewer construction workers

There are more independent workers in some industries, but they were offset in the government data by declines elsewhere, says Lucas Puente, chief economist at Thumbtack, an online marketplace for photographers, plumbers and other contractors.

The number of independent contractors rose by about 200,000 in transportation from 2005 to 2017, the government's report found.

But the number of independent contractors in construction fell by about 225,000 over the same period.

Drive for Uber part time? You weren't counted

Puentes and some other analysts said the government's report probably undercounted the number of people in alternative jobs.

In considering whether to include someone as part of the alternative workforce, it considered

only a worker's primary job.

So anyone who worked at a retailer for, say, 20 hours a week and drove for Uber 10 hours a week wasn't counted.

In addition, the government asked people only whether they'd worked independently in the past week. Given the erratic work schedules of many gig workers that narrowly phrased question might also have contributed to an undercount.

Tax records point to more independent work

Another puzzle is that tax data suggests that more Americans are self-employed as freelancers or independent contractors, Katz said. The proportion of Americans filing Schedule C forms, used for business income, has risen steadily in the past decade, even while the Labor Department's surveys have found that self-employment has declined.

Contracted out? You might not have been counted, either

Katz and Krueger's 2016 study found a sizable increase in Americans working for contracting firms — companies that provide, for example, janitorial or security services.

Many economists regard that as a bigger concern than gig workers: When a company contracts out its services, it typically does so to

cut costs through lower wages or skimpier benefits.

Yet the government counted only a subset of contract workers — those who work for just one customer, like security guards at a specific building.

It didn't include people who work for multiple customers, such as employees at a commercial laundry cleaning linen for a hotel that once did it in-house. The government wanted to avoid also counting higher-end consultants and others who serve multiple companies.

So what does it matter?

The government's report was the subject of intense interest in part because of the impact it might have on the policy debates surrounding independent work.

Freelance advocates say their ranks are growing steadily.

Many say policymakers should consider ways to help them, such as by making health and retirement benefits more portable from job to job.

But if independent work isn't growing much, then such changes aren't as urgent.

"If we don't understand the labor market in the United States, we won't have policies that reflect how it works," said Stephane Kasriel, CEO of Upwork, an online freelance marketplace.

6 Mayors – Including Wheeler and Durkan – Want Pot Removed From Federal List of Illegal Drugs

Coalition asks for federal guidance of financial institutions and expanded access to medical marijuana

Gillian Flaccus, Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Mayors from six U.S. cities in states with legal marijuana said Monday they have formed a coalition to push for federal marijuana policy reform just days after President Donald Trump expressed support for bipartisan congressional legislation to ease the federal ban on pot.

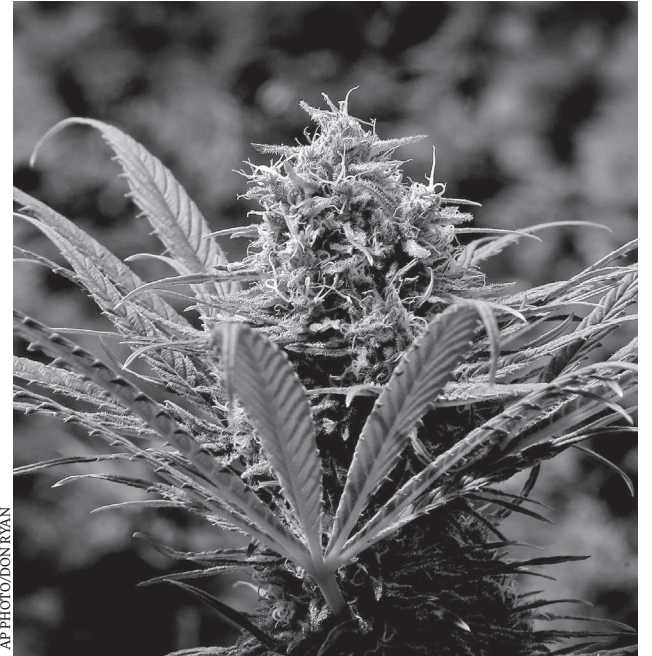
Mayors from Denver, Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Las Vegas and West Sacramento — all in marijuana-friendly states — sponsored a resolution at the U.S. Conference of Mayors in Boston that asked the U.S. government to remove cannabis from a list of illegal drugs, among other things.

It was approved unanimously by the broader gathering Monday, Larry Jones said, a spokesman for the conference.

Mayors from Oakland, California and Thornton, Colorado weren't sponsors but pledged to advocate for federal reforms.

"As mayors of cities that have successfully implemented and managed this new industry, we have hands-on experience that can help Congress take the right steps to support other local governments as they prepare to enter this new frontier," said Denver Mayor Michael B. Hancock, who led the coalition. "We all face common challenges."

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler said marijuana businesses employ thousands of people and generate millions of dollars



A marijuana plant is shown at a commercial grow in Springfield, Ore., May 24, 2018. Mayors from six U.S. cities where marijuana is legal have formed a coalition with the aim of preparing other states and the federal government for marijuana legalization. Mayors from Denver, Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Las Vegas and West Sacramento announced Monday, June 11, 2018, on Twitter that they had sponsored the resolution.

in Oregon.

"Cannabis prohibition has failed. It has failed to keep our children safe, it has failed law enforcement, and it has especial-

The bill supported by both parties was introduced June 7 and would dramatically reshape the nation's legal landscape for pot users and

“Eventually, legalization will come to every state — and we want to make sure it's done so safely and effectively

ly failed communities of color disproportionately targeted and prosecuted for low-level drug offenses," he said in an e-mail Monday.

"Eventually, legalization will come to every state — and we want to make sure it's done so safely and effectively."

The resolution comes after Trump said he would "probably" back a bipartisan congressional effort to ease a U.S. ban on the drug that about 30 states have legalized in some form.

businesses.

The federal ban that puts marijuana on the same level as LSD and heroin has created a conflict with states that have legalized pot in some form, creating a two-tiered enforcement system at the state and federal levels.

The legislation with four sponsors, including Republican U.S. Sen. Cory Gardner of Colorado, would ensure states have the right to deter-

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For access to the bid documents, contact Holly Snow at Holly.Snow@jedunn.com

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