

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4303

September 27, 2024

Acting Secretary of Labor Julie A. Su
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Su,

I am writing to draw attention to an emerging and troubling trend in the labor market: the increasing prevalence of so-called "ghost jobs."

Multiple media reports attest to the increasing number of job postings on first—and second-party websites that appear to be genuine employment opportunities tailored to attract applicants but remain open indefinitely because the posters do not intend to fill the corresponding role.¹

A concerning report surveyed 1,000 hiring managers in October 2023 highlights the growing prevalence of ghost jobs. Hiring managers cited several reasons for posting these ghost jobs: some wanted to create the impression that their company was growing, while others aimed to reassure overworked staff by signaling that help was on the way. Another group admitted they left job listings open, hoping their dream candidate might eventually apply.²

The results also revealed that 68 percent of employers surveyed posted job postings that remained "live" for more than 30 days, and 40 percent kept listings open for even longer lifecycles, extending to two to three months. Additionally, 50 percent of hiring managers confessed they manipulated their postings to serve as "talent pools" for future vacancies but failed to inform applicants that their application to these posts would not actually fill an immediate or near-term vacancy.

The rise of ghost jobs perpetuates a sense of frustration and mistrust among job seekers, delaying their pursuit of real opportunities, prolonging periods of unemployment, and decreasing overall workforce participation. Candidates invest considerable time and effort in applying to positions, tailoring résumés, and preparing for interviews, only to discover that the job does not exist.

As skilled workers are left in limbo, needless inefficiencies stemming from avoidable decreased workforce participation yield economic inefficiencies that slow job market recovery and reduce

¹ For further reading, see, <https://www.npr.org/2024/06/14/nx-s1-5001857/what-are-ghost-jobs>,
<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/fake-job-listing-ghost-jobs-cbs-news-explains/>,
<https://www.cnbc.com/2024/08/22/ghost-jobs-why-fake-job-listings-are-on-the-rise.html>.

² <https://clarifycapital.com/job-seekers-beware-of-ghost-jobs-survey>

productivity. In addition, the possibility of inaccurate labor market signals underwriting our unemployment figures and labor demand projections that drive major policy decisions is concerning.

I seek to understand more about how the Department of Labor addresses this issue and how we might collaborate to reduce the negative impacts of ghost jobs on workers and the labor market.

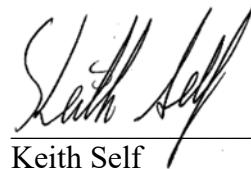
Specifically, I would appreciate your insights on the following questions:

- What is the Department of Labor's current understanding of the scope and prevalence of ghost job listings in the U.S. job market? Are there any ongoing studies or assessments on this topic?
- How do ghost job postings affect the accuracy of unemployment figures and other labor market indicators? Has the Department identified any statistical anomalies or trends that suggest a significant impact?

As we continue to navigate the challenges of our evolving labor market, we must ensure that American workers can access genuine employment opportunities fairly.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to collaborating with you and getting your response within 30 days.

Sincerely,



Keith Self
Member of Congress