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To: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Energy, Communications, and Technology
Date: November 1, 2023
From: Amanda Fisher, NFIB Michigan State Director
Re: Opposition to Senate Bill 519 – Worker Economic Transition Office

On behalf of over 10,000 small business owners in Michigan, NFIB is writing to express its opposition to Senate Bill 519, which would create a new governmental entity to help “displaced workers” who lose employment due to “transition-impacted” industries.

Public policy, by its nature, will have positive and negative impacts on varying communities of interest. It is the legislature’s role to weigh these impacts and make a decision they believe to be the best for the citizens they represent. To turn around and then try to solve the problems created by that decision for a few specific workers with even more legislation and government bureaucracy is hypocritical and arrogant.

It appears the primary reasons for this legislation is to mitigate job losses that might occur due to environmental policies being pushed and enacted by the current legislature. Many bills passed by this and previous legislatures, as well as executive orders, have had a direct negative impact on small businesses and their employees, causing loss of livelihoods. Are these workers less important?

While we do not believe that this new entity and its purpose is the purview of government, it is made more egregious by the picking of “winners and losers.” This legislation is clearly aimed at very specific constituencies (ie: union workers) and is constructed so that the committee can choose to play favorites when it comes to which workers and industries will be considered “transitional” and receive help.

NFIB suggests that if there are concerns regarding the impact of other legislation on certain industries and jobs, that legislative leaders should consider more measured approaches to transitions that would lessen the impact on ALL Michigan jobs, workers, and businesses. For these reasons, NFIB opposes Senate Bill 519.