

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 18, 2026

The Honorable William Wiatrowski  
Deputy Commissioner  
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics  
4600 Silver Hill Road  
Washington, DC 20212

Dear Deputy Commissioner Wiatrowski:

Across the country, many Americans are feeling the pain of the current job market. One factor harming applicant prospects is an increase in “ghost jobs”, or online job postings listed by companies that do not actually exist or have no active intent to hire.<sup>1</sup> I write to highlight this ongoing trend and to express concern with the potential impact these misleading job openings may have on the ability to accurately assess labor market conditions in the United States.

Companies post ghost jobs for a number of reasons, including to pool talent for future use, satisfy compliance requirements, or signal company growth to investors.<sup>2</sup> The use of artificial intelligence (AI) by online hiring platforms has also led to the increase in ghost jobs as employers can easily advertise an opening, allowing companies to recruit less actively and leave job postings open for long periods of time.

This trend is wide-reaching and growing. According to a survey, 40 percent of employers admitted to posting job listings with no intention of filing them.<sup>3</sup> Concerningly, 70 percent of these employers defended the practice, claiming the postings lead to a boost in revenue and productivity.<sup>4</sup> In reality, ghost jobs waste time and energy for job seekers responding to jobs that may never be filled. This impossible job search erodes worker confidence and undermines trust in the labor market. It is particularly harmful for recent graduates and young workers who do not have professional networks or references that help experienced candidates land jobs, leaving them frustrated as they apply to hundreds of jobs on online hiring platforms. As a result, 72% of U.S. adults agree that applying for jobs “feels like sending a resume into a black box”.<sup>5</sup>

The Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS), published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, provides data on job openings in the U.S. Job openings can be included in JOLTS if a specific position exists, there is work available, the job could start within 30 days, and the employer is actively recruiting workers from outside the establishment to fill the position.<sup>6</sup> Ghost jobs may satisfy these criteria even when no hiring decision is immediate, inflating JOLTS- reported job openings. Since 2024, job openings have outnumbered job hirings by a

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.columbialawreview.org/content/ghost-jobs/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF12977>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/fake-job-listing-ghost-jobs-cbs-news-explains/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://fortune.com/2025/01/16/job-market-rife-fake-listing-ghosting-hiring-managers/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://fortune.com/2024/12/03/great-pause-hiring-frustrates-job-applicants/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.bls.gov/jlt/jltfaq.htm>

staggering 2.2 million a month.<sup>7</sup> The millions of job openings in federal data may overstate the strength of the labor market to both workers and policymakers, including the Federal Reserve who uses JOLTS data to gauge labor market tightness for interest rate adjustments. I am concerned that ghost jobs could be skewing JOLTS data, thereby misinforming policymakers about the true state of the labor market.

To gain a better understanding of this issue, please respond to the following questions by June 30, 2026.

1. Has the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) conducted any analysis on the prevalence and impact of ghost jobs on JOLTS data? If so, can BLS share this analysis? If not, does BLS have plans to conduct such an analysis?
2. How does BLS define “actively recruiting” for JOLTS purposes?
3. When employers self-report job openings in JOLTS, what is the verification process to confirm the openings reflect genuine hiring intent?
4. Since 2021, there has been a persistent 30 percent gap between the number of job openings and hires. Has BLS investigated the cause of this discrepancy?
5. Does BLS believe that employers have any incentive to over-report job openings in JOLTS survey responses? If so, how does BLS attempt to correct for this issue?
6. Does BLS require employers to report the length of time a job posting was open? If not, would BLS consider adding a "time-to-fill" requirement, a metric measuring how long a job opening has been available, for JOLTS reporting?
7. Has BLS engaged with the Department of Labor or the Federal Trade Commission regarding the impact of ghost jobs on job seekers?
8. Has BLS engaged with the Federal Reserve on the impact of ghost jobs distorting labor market data?

Sincerely,



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Ruben Gallego

United States Senator

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cnbc.com/2024/06/27/4-in-10-companies-say-theyve-posted-a-fake-job-this-year-what-that-means.html>

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 18, 2026

The Honorable Andrew N. Ferguson  
Chair  
U.S. Federal Trade Commission  
600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20580

The Honorable Keith Sonderling  
Acting Secretary  
U.S. Department of Labor  
200 Constitution Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Commissioner Ferguson and Acting Secretary Sonderling:

Across the country, many Americans are feeling the pain of the current job market. One factor harming applicant prospects is an increase in “ghost jobs”, or online job postings listed by companies that do not actually exist or have no active intent to hire.<sup>1</sup> I write to highlight this ongoing trend and to express concern with the potential impact these misleading job openings may have on the ability to accurately assess labor market conditions in the United States.

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On February 26, 2025, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) launched the Joint Labor Task Force with the Department of Labor (DOL). According to the Task Force’s directive, this effort is focused on “investigations and prosecutions of deceptive, unfair, or anticompetitive labor market conduct” including deceptive job advertising.<sup>6</sup> A job posting an employer has no genuine intention to fill is a deceptive job advertisement and this practice deserves a thorough investigation. Additionally, posting ghost jobs allows employers to artificially exert undue leverage on existing employees by retaining lists of future potential workers ready to replace existing employees, raising questions about whether posting ghost jobs is a form of anticompetitive labor market behavior distorting true labor supply and demand.

American workers who invest their time, energy, and hope in pursuing job opportunities deserve the protection of the FTC and DOL from these deceptive practices. To gain a better understanding of this issue, please respond to the following questions by June 30, 2026.

1. Has the FTC, DOL, or the Joint Labor Task Force conducted any analysis on the prevalence and impact of ghost jobs on job seekers? If so, please share your findings. If not, please describe any future plans to conduct such an analysis.
2. Is the Joint Labor Task Force currently undertaking any inter-agency coordination on ghost jobs?
3. Does the FTC or the Joint Labor Task Force consider ghost jobs a form of deceptive job advertising?
4. Has the FTC or DOL conducted any analysis on employers posting job listings to gather a pool of applicants to discourage existing employees from seeking higher wages or promotions?
5. Has the FTC had any communication with third party job platforms or companies regarding the accuracy of listed job openings?
6. Has the FTC considered drafting a rule to regulate ghost jobs, including requiring employers or third-party hiring platforms to disclose when a posting is not tied to an active vacancy or immediate hiring need?

Sincerely,

  
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Ruben Gallego  
United States Senator

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/news/press-releases/2025/02/ftc-launches-joint-labor-task-force-protect-american-workers>