



Future of Work Commission First Convening, Day One
Setting Goals and Expectations of the Commission

Opening Remarks of Labor Secretary Julie A. Su

September 10, 2019

The Governor has adopted “California for All” as the guiding principle of this administration and the charge of this Commission is nothing less than answering the question of what an economy that works for all looks like. How do we create a just economy in which everyone shares in our prosperity, everyone has a stake, work is rewarding, and we honor our commitments to one another through a social compact for California workers?

The Commission will explore this question not as a theoretical exercise but to develop concrete action steps and recommendations. The make-up of the Commission, with leaders in tech, business, labor, low-wage worker advocacy, education, venture capital, economic development, and government, represents innovators and doers who can not only develop recommendations but champion them and bring them to life.

Today, a full one-third of California workers makes less than \$15 an hour.

The Commission will help our state get ready for the years and decades ahead – to make sure that advances in technology respect the dignity of work and of workers. That we view automation not as on a collision course with jobs, but as an opportunity for building an economy that works for every Californian.

Fighting income and wealth inequality and ensuring everyone has the opportunity to succeed is the defining economic challenge of our time, and California will face it head on.

It is worth noting that in 1964, California had a Commission to tackle future of work challenges. At that time, all of the Commissioners were men and I believe all or almost all of them were white. Looking at our Commission today and seeing the beautiful diversity of our State reflected in this composition, I am very hopeful that this Commission will be different and groundbreaking in more ways than one.



In addition to Chief of Staff Ann O'Leary's call to action—asking that you be bold, that you be creative, that you challenge assumptions about the way things have to be and don't take policies or structures as they are now to be the only way they could be—I want to add that this Commission should be concrete and action-oriented.

This convening and this Commission are not just to have a conversation about how workers do better, but how do we do better by workers? What is the role and responsibility of the business community? Tech community? Educational institutions? Government? Unions? How will we combat not just income inequality but wealth inequality? The lack of quality of the jobs rather than just lack of skills of working people? The racial and gender disparities in work, working conditions, access and opportunity?

Work has always been about more than just income and salary. It is also about dignity, pride and sense of purpose. Work at its best is about who we are, what we care about, and how we identify.

While there is much talk about how AI will destroy jobs and robots will take the place of humans, I urge you to adopt this as the Commission's founding principle: there is nothing inevitable about the shape of our future economy.

California's economy is the fifth largest in the world; the future of it is in our hands.