Initial selection of topics for Commissioner discussion

PART 1
PROBLEM CATEGORIES

What are the problems that need to be solved for?

1. Unequal distribution of wages, income, and wealth
   - Expansion of low-wage work and individuals earning less than a living wage
   - ‘Hollowing out’ of middle-wage jobs
   - Wage/income inequality (esp. by race, place, gender)
   - Wealth inequality (esp. enormous racial wealth gap)

2. Decline in job quality
   - Fissuring of work and rise of new employment models
     - Breakdown of traditional employer/employee relationship
     - Growth in subcontracting and freelance work
     - Misclassification of workers
   - Enforcement of employment law
   - Improving job quality in sectors that will have large growth (e.g. home care)
   - Irregular scheduling
   - Workplace safety
   - Bundling of benefits (e.g., healthcare, retirement) with employment
   - Career pathways and barriers to upward mobility
   - Declining investment in training and professional development

3. Geographic and demographic inequalities
   - Communities of color disproportionately affected by job quality changes
   - Limits to job opportunities (and higher potential for future displacement) for different groups of people, e.g., women, youth, older workers, workers with a high school degree or less, workers of color
   - Rural communities losing out on shifting nature of employment
   - Occupational segregation (e.g. by gender, race, immigration status)

4. Gaps in the social safety net
   - Modernizing current inadequacies (e.g., providing support for workers in transition)
   - Adjusting for anticipated/projected needs (e.g. aging workers)

5. Non-work barriers to employment
   - Rising costs limit access to employment for some individuals (e.g., housing, transportation, childcare)
   - Exclusion from the workforce of vulnerable groups (e.g., for the disabled, previously incarcerated, veterans, etc.)

6. Decline of worker power and organization
   - Shrinking worker power and organization is connected to inequality and declining job quality
   - Current labor laws and other policy choices do not create adequate paths for unionization
   - Concentration of industry power and fissured workplaces present new imbalances and obstacles to worker power

7. Industry structure and concentration of employer power
   - Economic gains of productivity improvements are largely captured by shareholders, not in employee compensation
   - Monopsony: concentration of firms in an industry concentrates the hiring power of these employers
   - Growing sectors have low job quality and worker power, particularly those sectors disproportionately employing women and people of color—from job quality above (e.g., care work, food services)
8. Automation and resulting transitions for workers
   • Mitigating impacts on workers displaced by automation
   • Leveraging technological change to improve jobs, not devalue them
   • Effects of technological change on job quality, not just job loss
   • New ways of working as humans interact with machines
   • Workers lack a role in creating and directing new technologies in the workplace

   • Inadequate/nonexistent protections for collection of data in the workplace
   • How workers can better own their data and benefit from data they generate
   • Algorithmic bias (e.g. in hiring, worker assessment, etc) and its specific effects on marginalized groups and people of color

10. Skills and preparation for jobs of the future
    • Skills of workforce may not match the future demand for specific skills in the labor market
    • Education to prepare students for jobs that may not exist today
    • Need for life-long education as work and occupations evolve quickly
    • Limited examples of successful re-skilling programs at scale
    • Workers can help define the skill and preparation they need