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## Labor pick is good for small business

By: Allen West

*From Alfredo Ortiz, President and CEO of the Job Creators Network, in response to "A labor pick who mistreats labor" (For the Record, Feb. 2):*

While President Donald Trump is making his way through his first weeks in office, his cabinet nominees are undergoing another week of grueling confirmation hearings. Proponents hope that they can quickly be confirmed and get started bringing reforms to increase American prosperity and security.

At the top of the list of nominees who can help reinvigorate the small business community, which drives the nation's job and economic growth, is labor secretary nominee Andy Puzder.

Puzder knows how to create jobs and finally raise wages for working Americans. This is evidenced not only by his copious writing on the subject but also by his success as CEO of CKE Restaurants. Under his tenure, CKE, which owns the restaurants Carl's Jr. and Hardee's, has grown from a multi-million dollar company into a billion-dollar brand.

Puzder has seen firsthand – with 3,000 domestic franchisees employing 75,000 Americans – how Labor Department over-regulation contributes to a stagnant labor market. His employees and franchisees have had to contend with the Labor Department's proposals to double the overtime exemption salary threshold, dramatically raise the minimum wage, and push for a "joint employer" mandate that would upend the franchise system, among others.

Though such regulations may sound good on paper, Puzder has seen how they make it more difficult to create jobs and raise wages in practice.

Such regulations have a disproportionate impact on small businesses, which often don't have the compliance resources or the economies of scale necessary to implement them. As a result, small businesses still haven't recovered from the Great Recession. Government data show that job gains from new firms are at the lowest share of employment since 1992 and startup formation continues its steady decline.

Puzder's approach would reduce the regulatory roadblock preventing business creation and expansion. Who ultimately gains from the resulting robust small business environment? Employees and jobseekers who receive more opportunities to achieve the American Dream.

Puzder's record also shows that CKE has effectively balanced labor compliance with business growth. According to a Bloomberg BNA analysis, Carl's Jr. and Hardee's have the third lowest wage-and-hour violation rate among 20 major fast food restaurants.

Puzder will make an excellent labor secretary because he will roll back the current Labor Department's burdens on small businesses and their employees. That's the pro-worker agenda this country needs.