



June 5, 2018

The Honorable Mimi Walters  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Walters:

On behalf of the National Retail Federation (NRF), I write today in support of your legislation, H.R. 4219, the Workflex in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act. Thank you for your thoughtful contribution to the policy debate around benefits and leave time.

By way of background, NRF is the world's largest retail trade association, representing discount and department stores, home goods and specialty stores, Main Street merchants, grocers, wholesalers, chain restaurants and Internet retailers from the United States and more than 45 countries. Retail is the nation's largest private sector employer, supporting one in four U.S. jobs – 42 million working Americans. Contributing \$2.6 trillion to annual GDP, retail is a daily barometer for the nation's economy.

Many retailers already provide employees with extensive, flexible benefits tailored to their workforce needs. Unfortunately, laws passed by many state and local governments have left an uneven regulatory environment for retailers. For those retailers seeking relief from the patchwork of state and local laws, your legislation provides a sensible solution while preserving the ability of states to regulate workplace policy for employers that do not voluntarily comply with H.R. 4219.

For decades, retailers have sought to provide employee benefits designed to attract and retain workers while balancing services to consumers and business necessity. Retail comprises a diverse workforce—featuring workers with skills in everything from technology, robotics and finance to sales, logistics and customer service—and your legislation recognizes the reality that retailers must be flexible to compete for that talent in today's economy.

Too often, state and local government mandates are well-intentioned but ill-conceived. Mandates create one-size-fits-all obstacles for multi-state retailers to navigate, and the laws often do not mesh well with other existing benefits or policies. Moreover, state and local laws are restrictive in their approach and disregard the actual needs of today's workforce. Finally, they can be particularly challenging for retailers because consumers expect customized products and services that may not always be possible in a highly regulated workplace environment.

Thank you for introducing this legislation; your thoughtful consideration of the needs of workers, families, consumers and employers is evident in the voluntary and flexible approach of the proposal. We look forward to working with you as Congress further considers H.R. 4219.

Sincerely,

David French  
Senior Vice President  
Government Relations