



OTHER VIEWS COMMENTARY

## Freelancers, an Illinois bill says you have the right to be paid on time

A recently passed bill, similar to a New York City law, would provide pay protections for freelance workers. An Aurora-based freelancer urges Gov. J.B. Pritzker to sign it and make Illinois the first state to extend such protections on a broad scale.

By Anna Burgess Yang | May 29, 2023, 11:15am UTC

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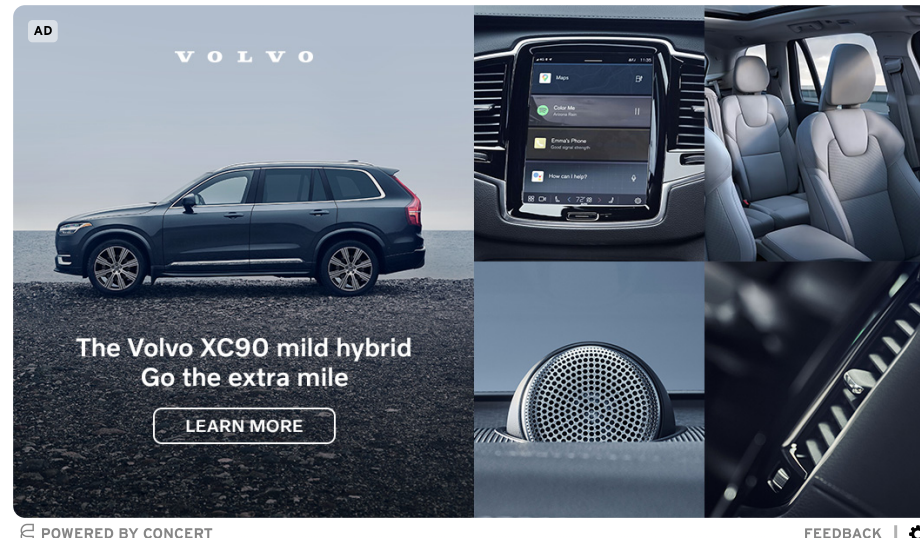


I've heard nightmare stories from fellow freelancers who need to chase clients for payment, writes Anna Burgess Yang, an Aurora-based writer and journalist. | stock.adobe.com

Like so many others, I joined The Great Resignation in early 2021 and quit my job. Not only did I leave a 15-year career in software, but I pivoted to content marketing and journalism. I was essentially “starting over” and began freelancing to build a writing portfolio and supplement my income.

One of my first clients was a local marketing agency. I knew the co-founder, and she approached me about writing an article and signed a contract, I researched the topic and turned in the draft. She thanked me for the work. I sent her an invoice for \$500.

The due date for my invoice came and went. I sent multiple emails over the course of several weeks, which were ignored.



I was trapped, with no real means of recourse. I could contact an attorney, but knew that would cost money, not to mention my time and energy. Infuriated, I decided to let the \$500 go uncollected.

### Opinion

I built up my freelance business and eventually had a full roster of clients. In early 2023, I took on some work ghostwriting for an executive. I wrote several blog posts over the course of a month, some of which were published quickly on the company's website.

I sent an invoice for \$3,500, copying an individual in the company's accounts payable department. When the invoice was three days past due, I sent a friendly reminder. No response.

Unlike my prior experience, I knew I'd need to take action to get my \$3,500. Since I freelance full time, \$3,500 was a significant portion of my income for the month — and for many freelancers would be the difference between making rent or buying groceries. I began to think about my next steps, such as contacting the company's CEO, to see if I could get someone's attention. I also wondered how I was going to cover the \$3,500 gap in my bank account.

Though I sent several reminders, the company dragged its feet on the process until finally, I was paid 39 days after I'd sent the original invoice — far outside the terms of the contract or my planned budget.

Whether it was because of greed, indifference or regret, in both instances, I held up my end of the signed contract — but my clients did not hold up theirs. If I had been a W-2 employee, there'd be no question that I'd be paid, entitled to wages or salary under the law.

It's an all-too-common scenario: Freelancers being ghosted altogether or not paid at all for their work.

According to Upwork, 60 million Americans freelanced in 2022, making up 39% of the total workforce and contributing \$1.35 trillion to the economy. Many people freelance because they love the freedom. But, at least in my circle, others have turned to freelancing as an alternative in a tumultuous job market.

I've heard nightmare stories about chasing clients for payment. We're talking about late payments that threaten livelihoods, including the ability to pay mortgage/rent and bills.

I was elated to hear about the Illinois Freelance Worker Protection Act (HB1122). The legislation provides basic protections to freelancers, including requiring clients to pay within 30 days of the work's completion unless otherwise stated in the contract, and it provides for damages if freelancers aren't paid on time. Clients can't retaliate against freelancers who pursue payment, and the Illinois Department of Labor can investigate entities that repeatedly violate the law.

When the bill passed the Illinois House and Senate, I breathed a sigh of gratitude. State Rep. Will Guzzardi, D-Chicago, and state Sen. Cristina Pacione-Zayas, D-Chicago, championed the bill because they recognized the value of freelancers and the shortcomings in state law that often leave freelancers struggling to collect payment.

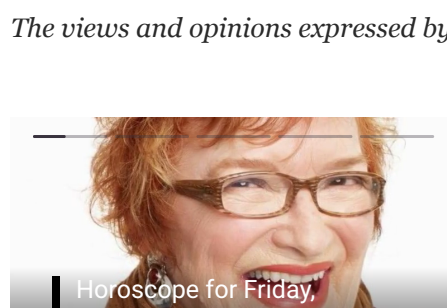
The model works: New York City's Freelance Isn't Free Act contains similar provisions and helped freelancers collect more than \$2 million in late and delinquent payments over the past few years. Cities like Los Angeles and Columbus, Ohio, have recently passed their own laws. Illinois now has the chance to be the first state to enact these protections on a broader scale.

I urge Gov. J.B. Pritzker to sign this bill into law, which will mean more stability for freelancers and require their clients to honor the terms of contracts. Most important, it recognizes that even though we're not full-time employees, we're still workers who deserve to be paid.

Anna Burgess Yang is a freelance writer and journalist living in Aurora.

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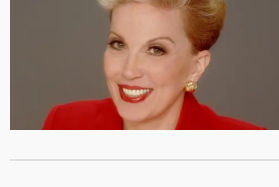


#### DEAR ABBY

**Dear Abby: I'm sad, anxious when my 2 kids are with my ex**

Mom agreed to a 50-50 schedule with the children's unfaithful, abusive father, and she worries about whether that's best for them.

By Abigail Van Buren | Aug 4, 2023, 11:00am UTC

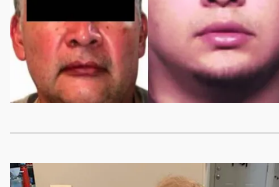


#### THE WATCHDOGS

**They were 2 Chicago pizza delivery guys. Then, they ran a Mexican drug cartel.**

The Guerreros Unidos cartel authorities say brothers Adan and Mario Casarrubias Salgado led fed Chicago's appetite for heroin and is blamed for the massacre of 43 students in Mexico.

By Oscar Lopez and Frank Main | Aug 4, 2023, 10:30am UTC

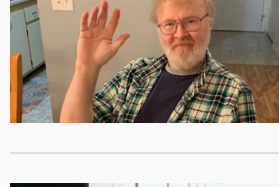


#### OBITUARIES

**Randy Garrett, who helped overturn wrongful convictions in Jeanine Nicarico's killing, dead at 64**

Information he unearthed helped free innocent men in the 1983 killing of the 10-year-old Naperville girl. "I know there are at least three innocent men who owe their freedom and reputations to Randy," attorney Gary Johnson said.

By Thomas Frisbie | Aug 4, 2023, 10:30am UTC

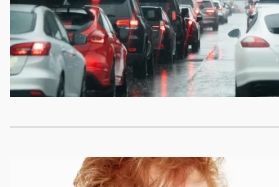


#### THE WATCHDOGS

**More evidence that car insurance pricing in Illinois is biased against the poor**

A new study backs up a Sun-Times Watchdogs report and comes as rates across the state continue to skyrocket. The study found that bad credit means you pay more for car insurance.

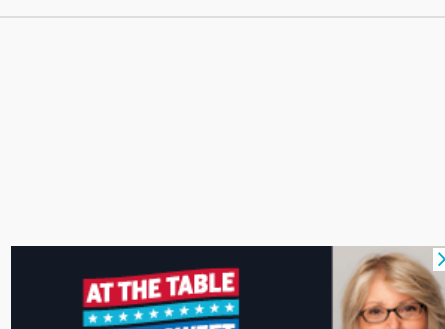
By Stephanie Zimmermann | Aug 4, 2023, 10:30am UTC



#### HOROSCOPES

**Horoscope for Friday, August 4, 2023**

By Georgia Nicols | Aug 4, 2023, 5:01am UTC



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