Corporate Cabinet Profile Series

Nominee: Andy Puzder
Cabinet Title: Labor Secretary
Current or immediate former title: President and CEO of CKE Restaurants
Corporate Connection: CKE Restaurants, Carl's Jr., Hardee's

Andy Puzder has for more than 16 years been the president and CEO of CKE Restaurants, parent company of fast-food chains Hardee’s and Carl’s Jr. Critics charge the company -- which has faced legal action for firing workers for labor organizing activity -- with fostering an anti-worker, anti-union atmosphere. CKE currently operates more than 3,300 restaurants in 42 states and in 28 countries. Puzder, a major GOP donor, has been an outspoken critic of the Obama administration’s Labor Department policies.

- Restaurants affiliated with CKE have been investigated by the U.S. Department of Labor. At least one franchise-owned restaurant is currently under investigation.
- 108 investigations at CKE-affiliated restaurants dating back to 2004 resulted in the businesses agreeing to pay $153,921 in back wages for 936 employees, mostly from minimum wage and overtime violations.
- Puzder has praised automating jobs, saying of the machines that replace workers, "They're always polite, they always upsell, they never take a vacation, they never show up late, there's never a slip-and-fall, or an age, sex, or race discrimination case."
- He opposed the Obama administration proposal to raise the minimum wage to $10.10.
- Responding to criticism that Carl's Jr. ads objectify women, Puzder said, "I like our ads. I like beautiful women eating burgers in bikinis. I think it's very American."
- Puzder authored a Forbes op-ed criticizing the Obama Labor Department’s overtime rule, which would raise the threshold for salaried workers to qualify for overtime pay.
- Puzder participated in a U.S. Chamber of Commerce panel criticizing the Obama administration’s policy that would allow franchise owners to be held liable for franchisee misconduct.

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1. [http://www.ckr.com/about_management.html#puzder](http://www.ckr.com/about_management.html#puzder)
2. [https://thinkprogress.org/puzder-labor-abuses-f235d772bc8c#.fnyvunaw5](https://thinkprogress.org/puzder-labor-abuses-f235d772bc8c#.fnyvunaw5)
3. [http://www.ckr.com/about.html](http://www.ckr.com/about.html)
9. [https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/246487](https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/246487)
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- Prior to becoming CKE’s CEO, Puzder was the executive vice president and general council of Fidelity National.12
- Puzder has made more than $20,000 in campaign contributions to Donald Trump and his allies, and has given more than $1.3 million to Republican candidates and campaigns since 1990.13
- His net worth is undisclosed, but reports suggest it reaches into the tens of millions of dollars.14

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12 [http://www.ckr.com/about_management.html#puzder](http://www.ckr.com/about_management.html#puzder)
13 [https://www.opensecrets.org/trump](https://www.opensecrets.org/trump)