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Ghost Jobs Are Becoming More Common. Now a Senator Is Demanding an Investigation Into the Practice

Two experts weigh in on why this practice is so damaging to the labor market.

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JUN 22, 2026

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Ghost jobs have long frustrated job seekers. Now an elected official is targeting the practice.

This week, Senator Ruben Gallego sent letters to the U.S. Department of Labor, the Federal Trade Commission, and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, urging the Trump administration to take action against companies posting job listings they have no intention of filling. He called on both agencies to investigate how widespread the practice has become.

“I write to highlight this ongoing trend and to express concern with the potential impact these misleading job

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labor market conditions in the United States," he wrote.

As part of his inquiry, Gallego posed a detailed set of questions to both agencies, touching on how ghost jobs factor into federal labor data, what verification processes exist to confirm that reported openings reflect genuine hiring intent, and whether a persistent gap between job openings and actual hires has been looked into. He also asked whether any steps are being taken to make the data more accurate going forward.

The problem with ghost jobs

"Ghost jobs are what happens when hiring becomes a passive activity instead of an active one," Adam Jackson, the co-founder and CEO of Braintrust, a talent marketplace connecting companies with freelance tech workers, told Inc. "Companies post roles to build pipelines they may never need, to signal growth to investors, or simply because removing a posting requires more internal effort than leaving it up."

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data did look promising; job openings jumped to 7.62 million at the end of April—the highest level in nearly two years. The number exceeded economists' expectations for the second month in a row.

However, that number masks a more complicated reality. Those openings are not translating into actual hires at the same rate, leaving the labor market entrenched in a low-hire, low-fire dynamic that Gallego argues is being quietly distorted by ghost jobs.

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