

Schedules That Work Act + Part-Time Workers' Bill of Rights = A Fair Workweek for Hourly Workers





Half of hourly workers in the food service and retail industries receive less than one week's notice of when we are scheduled to work.*



Over two thirds of hourly workers in the food service and retail industries experience last-minute changes to our work hours.



Fifty percent of retail and food service workers work grueling "clopening" shifts, working late at night and returning early the next morning.

The Schedules That Work Act will provide two weeks' notice of schedules, compensate workers when their hours change at the last minute, give workers a voice in their schedules, and guarantee adequate time between shifts to commute, eat, and rest.

* All data is from Daniel Schneider and Kristen Harknett. 2019. "It's About Time: How Work Schedule Instability Matters for Workers, Families, and Racial Inequality." The Shift Project. Institute for Research on Labor and Employment. University of California, Berkeley



New research shows that workers who receive their shifts with less than 72 hours' notice are much more likely to leave their jobs than workers with more predictable hours.

Brandy Powell Fontana, California

I'm the sole provider for my five children and my mother. I worked at Big Lots for 11 months, but I had to quit my job because the hours were so awful. I received my work schedule on Saturday afternoon, just one day in advance, for the work-week beginning on Sunday. When I told the company that I would not be available because I had to take my kids to medical appointments, the store ignored my requests and called me in during my appointment times. I couldn't make any plans because there was always a chance that I would be called into work. Eventually the stress was too much for me and my family.

For many workers, myself included, the only solution to unpredictable hours is to quit and hope we can find a better job elsewhere. That means we lose the chance of advancing in the company and our managers lose experienced workers.

If our elected officials passed the Schedules That Work Act, stores like Big Lots would be required to post employees' schedules two weeks in advance and consider our shift requests. With adequate notice and the ability to request certain shifts, I would be able to schedule appointments for my kids and even take my family on vacation. Families shouldn't have to endure abusive scheduling practices in order to make ends meet.



Children whose parents work clopenings and experience last-minute schedule changes are significantly more likely to feel worthless, anxious, guilty, unhappy, or worried than children of parents with stable hours.

Jenny Allen Tacoma, Washington

I'm a veteran and single mother of two daughters who are 10 and 8 years old. I worked at Payless for about three years until my store closed this spring. My schedule at Payless changed frequently. I often had to work from opening to closing, and then come right back the next morning. I missed a lot of time with my kids. My daughter would call me at work and say "Can you please come home? When are you coming home?" It would break my heart, because by the time I got home, my kids were asleep. I felt like an absent parent.

Now I work at a warehouse, and my family is still struggling. The warehouse initially told me I would work forty hours a week, but I'm often sent home early after unloading the trucks, and even missing a few hours of pay makes a big difference. My daughters and I are living paycheck to paycheck.

Thousands of workers across the country are experiencing erratic schedules that make it impossible to balance work with the demands of being a good parent. The corporations we work for are demanding our flexibility, but I'm not getting paid enough to put the company's needs ahead of my kids.



One third of hourly food and retail workers work part-time but want to work more hours.

The Part-Time Workers' Bill of Rights will require employers to offer existing workers adequate hours before hiring new staff.

Jamie Pasqualetto New Jersey

I have worked at PetSmart for seven years, and I need a full-time job with benefits. But PetSmart only allows pet groomers to work full time, and my health condition (fibromyalgia) makes grooming the animals too painful. Not only am I stuck at part-time even as my store hires new cashiers and sales staff, but my schedule changes wildly with little notice. Almost every week, I am called to work at the last minute because the store is short-staffed. Sometimes I want to say no, but I can't afford to – even when I feel sick or I need to help my disabled mom. The amount of hours I work changes drastically each week, and my income is so low that I qualify for state health insurance. I have a car with two broken windows and it's been that way for years.

When your work creates so much instability, everything comes after your job. None of us should have to live that way. With the Schedules That Work Act, I would have the ability to decline last-minute shifts or would be paid extra for working them. Under the Part-Time Workers Bill of Rights, PetSmart would also have to give experienced workers like me additional hours before hiring new part-time workers.



6 in 10 hourly workers in the retail and food industries experience financial hardship such as homelessness, going hungry, forgoing medical care, or not paying utility bills. Workers with insufficient and highly variable work hours are at significantly greater risk for hardship.



Workers with unstable schedules are more likely to rely on a patchwork of informal childcare, including being forced to leave young children with older siblings or even on their own.

Adriana Bautista Bay City, Texas

I have worked at Walmart for almost 14 years. I transitioned to part-time work after my fourth daughter was born because I couldn't afford child care. Walmart assured me that I would work at least 20 hours per week, but I'm often scheduled to work just 5 hours per week. Instead of giving additional hours to current part-time employees like me who constantly request them, Walmart has continued to hire new part-time workers to keep hours low.

Part-time work is supposed to provide flexibility to balance work and family, but it hasn't worked that way for me. Walmart schedules me at different times every week, which makes it hard to line up consistent childcare. My mom helps me with the kids when she can, but most of the time I leave my kids alone with my 16-year-old daughter. No mother wants to be in that position, but often the alternative is missing out on income we need to put food on the table or keep a roof over our heads.

It doesn't have to be this way. Fair workweek laws that have been enacted in eight cities require companies like Walmart to give hardworking, experienced employees the chance to work more hours, before hiring new staff. The Part-Time Workers Bill of Rights would extend that protection to all of us. Mothers like me shouldn't have to choose between being present in their kids' lives and contributing financially to the home.



Parents with unstable schedules sleep less well, are more psychologically distressed, and are less happy when working unstable and unpredictable work schedules. That stress filters down to their children.

Heidi Diemand Millville, New Jersey

My husband and I have three children, ages 2, 13, and 15. I have worked at Target for three and a half years. My hours vary a lot - sometimes I only work 16 hours a week. When I work less than 25 hours, it's a struggle to pay our insurance and buy groceries for my family. There isn't always enough food to go around, and I've even faced threats of eviction for my apartment.

I want to work more hours, but it is hard for me to pick up last-minute shifts. I have a disability, and two of my children are also disabled, so we have a lot of medical appointments. My kids wouldn't be safe if I left them alone, so if I want to pick up a last-minute shift I have to ask a relative to watch my kids. Asking my family to provide childcare has made our relationships more complicated, and the emotional stress of coordinating care for my kids has exacerbated my chronic illness.

All I'm asking for is a predictable schedule with sufficient hours so I can provide for my family. If I were paid extra for last-minute shifts, I could hire a babysitter to watch my kids while I'm at work. And Target should offer additional hours to current part-time workers before hiring new employees. I've been through years of challenges but these reforms would make a big difference in my life.

Heather Scull Centralia, Washington

I've been working retail on and off since I was 17 and I'm now approaching retirement. I currently work at the Children's Place, where I was promised 5-10 hours a week when I was hired. I need every hour that I can get to pay rent and avoid dipping into my savings. Despite being "on call" every week, I'm lucky if I work even 5 hours. I should have plenty of time to help care for my grandson, but I've had to put my life on hold because I'm not sure when I'll be working.

If these companies rely on our availability, we should at least get enough hours to be financially stable. In my case, a stable schedule with 15-20 hours a week would relieve a huge amount of stress because I could count on being able to pay the bills, save for retirement and help out with my grandson. If we had the Schedules That Work Act, the Children's Place would have been required to give me a reliable estimate of my work hours when I started the job, instead of recruiting me with the promise of hours that don't exist.



LaShay James New Haven CT

My life is typical of many hard-working mothers in today's economy. I wake up daily at 3:30am to get everything ready for my kids before they wake up. Then, after an hour-long bus ride, I work a low wage job for about 14 hours a week.

I know that my employer tries to keep my hours low to avoid providing benefits. And I always work my hardest while trying to work more hours. But when my employer surprises me by suddenly asking me to work longer, I often can't because of prior commitments for my kids, even though I need the hours.

I am constantly stuck with an inability to properly plan my life around my work, leading to stress, financial instability, and missed opportunities. We need our elected officials to pass fair and predictable scheduling legislation, so that workers like me can have the stability, flexibility, and scheduling opportunities to excel. When employers don't consider the lives of people working for them, we lose our best shot at thriving.



For more information contact: Rachel Deutsch, Center for Popular Democracy, rdeutsch@populardemocracy.org; Terryssa Guerra, United for Respect, terrysa@united4respect.org

