

Fairer Scheduling Would Make it Easier for Part-Time Workers to Keep Their Jobs

Given before the House Economic Matters Committee

The Maryland Center on Economic Policy Supports House Bill 1175

Many Maryland families depend on one or more part-time jobs to help support their families. However, almost half of the people who work part time receive their schedules only one week or less in advance. Currently, employers are able to schedule workers as “on-call” for the day without any guarantee of work or pay, cancel shifts at the last minute, and send workers home early without compensating them. If workers are unable to meet these expectations, they are often punished with fewer hours or risk being fired.

House Bill 1175 would help protect these part-time workers from unfair scheduling practices that make it harder for them to climb the economic ladder and to care for their families. When workers are unable to provide for their families and are repeatedly looking for new employment, Maryland’s economy suffers. For these reasons The Maryland Center on Economic Policy supports House Bill 1175.

The Fair Scheduling Act would require employers to give three weeks’ notice of work schedules and would allow workers to decline any hours scheduled with less notice. This would enable workers to plan ahead to meet their work and non-work responsibilities. Families would have adequate time to arrange child care and make necessary medical appointments. When employers require workers to come in with little notice, employees with dependents have to scramble to find the proper care.¹ Likewise for when employers suddenly cancels shifts, employees may have already scheduled and paid for care. In fact, workers who have long commutes might already be on the road when they receive notice about their canceled shift.

The Fair Scheduling Act protects part time workers from sudden schedule changes by ensuring an hour of predictability pay at the worker's regular rate, if an employer decides to cancel or reduce a worker's shift within 21 days of the scheduled date. The employer then must post in writing a revised schedule so that the employee is clear and aware of the changes.

Employers often place their part-time workers on call so that if they need them to come in they know that they are available. However, for workers that are regularly scheduled to be on call, they have no guarantee of earning wages that day. Also, those workers are not able to work another part-time job during that day because they must be available all day. HB1175 would require

employers to pay employees for up to four hours of work when they are scheduled for on-call shifts. This will encourage employers to create stable and predictable schedules.

Businesses that heavily rely on on-call part-time workers to run their businesses face higher employee turnover because part time working schedules are unsustainable. By creating more family-friendly scheduling practices, Maryland businesses will benefit from reduced employee turnover and lower costs for hiring and training new employees, because they won't be hiring as often.ⁱⁱ

For these reasons, the Maryland Center on Economic Policy respectfully requests that the Ways and Means Committee give a favorable report to House Bill 1175.

ⁱ "Questions & Answers for Employees." *Questions & Answers for Employees*. Maryland State Department of Labor. Web.

ⁱⁱ "Bureau of Labor Statistics." *JOB OPENINGS AND LABOR TURNOVER – DECEMBER 2015 U.S Department of Labor*. Web.