

Oregon State Council



April 3, 2015

To: Members of the House Business and Labor Committee

Fr: Matt Swanson, SEIU Oregon State Council

Re: Support for Flexible and Predictable Scheduling

Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the more than 60,000 members of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) in the state of Oregon we urge your support for House Bill 3377. This bill addresses an important issue that many workers throughout the state of Oregon face each day, unpredictable and inflexible scheduling. The result of ever-changing policies in many industries has left workers struggling to get ahead as scheduling has become more automated and less flexible, usually without worker input.

More and more workers are piecing together part-time or on call work to pick up enough hours to get by, often employed in industries that have little room for a family or school friendly schedules. This presents real challenges to keeping up with the demands family life, especially for those with children.

Much of the new research shows this trend of part time and is growing amongst younger workers, people of color and low-income workers.ⁱ A landmark study of workplace scheduling policies from the University of Chicago, "Precarious Work Schedules among Early-Career Employees in the US: A National Snapshot" provided a comprehensive look at scheduling policies throughout the United States. The authors concluded that, "Legislation that establishes a comprehensive set of standards on scheduling practices is needed to ensure that workers in all occupations and at all levels of the labor market stand a fair chance of thriving at both work and home."ⁱⁱ We thank the sponsors of this legislation and our partners at Family Forward Oregon for following their advice.

Members of our union certainly see how an unpredictable and inflexible schedule can make life difficult for those trying to get ahead. On the service provider side this often is seen by those seeking employment or struggling to keep employment while also raising children. For many low income workers it is not just finding any job, it is finding the job that will allow them the predictability of schedule to be there to pick up a child after school or drop them off at day care.

Childcare providers routinely have to pick up care at odd hours depending on the needs of a parent's employer. Research has confirmed

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scheduling challenges amongst most working parents, “69 percent of mothers and 79 percent of fathers report that their hours fluctuated in the prior month by an average of approximately 40 percent when compared to their usual hours.”ⁱⁱⁱ This often makes a hardship to simply get children to and from school, activities or day care without any consistency.

Home Care, Janitorial, Food Service and Retail jobs are growing parts of Oregon’s employment opportunities and have a greater likelihood of utilizing less flexible or less stable schedules each week.^{iv} We know from the report the “High Cost of Low Wages,” that these industries have the highest concentration of SNAP and other public benefit recipients.^v So in Oregon we know that the jobs that are the least likely to pay a living wage are also the least likely to provide predictable schedules.

What House Bill 3377 would do is give workers a chance to gain some needed certainty in their basic work schedules. House Bill 3377 allows workers the freedom to request flexibility in scheduling, predictability in pay and on call scheduling and reasonable advance notice. For many Oregonians these simple provisions do not exist in their work experience. This important piece of legislation would ensure that families would have some additional stability.

Please join us in supporting House Bill 3377.

ⁱ Precarious Work Schedules among Early-Career Employees in the US: A National Snapshot. Susan J. Lambert Peter J. Fugiel Julia R. Henly University of Chicago. Found on line at: http://sascholars.uchicago.edu/work-scheduling-study/files/lambert.fugiel.henly_precarious_work_schedules.august2014.pdf. Pg 1.

ⁱⁱ Ibid, Pg. 19

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid, Pg. 16

^{iv} Ibid, Pg. 18, Table 13, At Risk Occupations.

^v “The High Cost of Low Wages,” Raahi Ready, et al. found on-line at <http://lerc.uoregon.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/2014-Oregon-Workforce-Report-The-High-Cost-of-Low-Wages-in-Oregon.pdf>