

To: Senate Workforce
From: Jason Nance
Re: Support of SB 888

Dear Chair Dembrow and Committee Members,

My name is Jason Nance and I have been working in a fast food restaurant in Eugene since the summer of 2009. In that time, I have battled with unreasonable expectations of what a person can do in an allotted amount of time, fluctuating schedules, and mandatory unpaid time off at the end of the year.

When I was hired, I was pretty desperate. I had no job, I wasn't able to transfer to the university in the time frame I'd intended and began to default on my student loans. I lived off of credit, but that only lasts so long with no funds coming in. I took the job I could get, given the economy at the time.

I would be scheduled three or four 4-5 hour shifts each week. I would add up the hours, multiply them by minimum wage, and subtract the 25% that's withheld in taxes, worker comp, Social Security, and Medicare, and that would leave a little bit for my rent and food. Then I would negotiate a payment plan on my loans, based on my projected income. Unfortunately the actual work week would often differ from the one posted. Sometimes there wasn't as much business as projected and as the newest hire I would be the one sent home early. Being sent home early from work is great if you get a salary, but terrible if you are paid by the minute. This would lead to considerably smaller paychecks than anticipated, leading to making me unable to meet my debt payment obligations, setting off a pattern of calls from angry collectors.

A day pass on the city bus currently costs \$3.50, after taxes that equals 1/2 an hour of pay. That's half an hour that anybody would be counting on when it's scheduled, and half an hour was the smallest of cuts.

The first Christmas I'd worked in my job it was made very clear that I'd be expected to work on Christmas Eve. I have no family in the area and all my friends were gone visiting theirs. Naturally, I was upset at the prospect of spending the holidays alone. But this was my job, it was my responsibility. As much as I didn't like the way I was going to be spending the holiday, I knew others were going to be spending the same holiday worse off. I had a job, I was grateful. After seeing my roommates off I caught the bus and went to work. As soon as I walked through the door, I was told it had been so slow that "projected man hours weren't going to be met" and that I couldn't clock on and needed to go home. I was devastated. I went home to an empty house for Christmas, with no plans. I thought I would be working. Isolated and alone, separated from everybody I cared about and for no reason. There was never even an apology.

After more than four years in the same low wage fast food job I finally have been promoted to a position where I enjoy some semblance of a consistent schedule, but even now that can change at any moment without my consent or knowledge. The majority of my co-workers are not so fortunate.

I originally took this job with the idea that it would be a temporary job that I worked for a matter of months while I looked for something with better pay and more steady hours. As we all know, things don't always go the way we plan them to go and I am still working at the same place.

As I write this I expect I'm working Wednesday, I'd even bet on it, but I won't know for sure until just a few days ahead. While days and times may be requested off, the store manager does view them as "requests that may be denied". He uses those requests to make the weekly schedules a month or more in advance but does not post them until Thursday. If there is a day two weeks in the future that I need off for any reason, it's too late to request it on the calendar and I can't see who would be available to trade my shifts with until just a few days in advance.

While I appreciate that I have this job at all, I frequently find myself grateful that I don't have family in the area. I would be ashamed to let my parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and siblings to see me work and live in these conditions. It is challenging enough to attempt to arrange for other parts of my life with such erratic and chaotic, unpredictable scheduling at work, such as volunteer activities. I have no idea how my coworkers who are parents deal with the dilemma of child care.

Thank you for taking time to read this and for considering this bill that would help working people like me have a more secure, stable life.

Sincerely,

Jason Nance
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