

Predictive Scheduling Talking Points (SB 828)

Scheduling Mandates—Bad for Employees, Bad for Employers

Proposals are currently floating in Oregon and in municipalities around the country that would require employers to provide employees with work schedules at least two weeks in advance, compensate workers if changes are made, and offer penalty wages if workers are called in at other than scheduled times. A primary goal of these bills is to help workers balance the demands of their jobs with family responsibilities. However, these mandates reduce flexibility for employers and employees—many of whom sought out their jobs for the flexibility they provided.

Workers and employers should be able to deal with unexpected life events.

Many workers report that they choose a job in retail or food service in order to have the flexibility to deal with anything from their own school schedules to the active lives of their children. But scheduling mandates make it difficult and expensive for employers to comply with last minute schedule change requests—even those requests that are due to a child’s illness or last minute opening for a badly needed medical appointment.

New companies and their employees benefit from flexible hiring and need-based scheduling.

Flexibility in scheduling workers is essential to starting or expanding a small business. The less time a business has operated, the harder it is to predict how customers will respond to products and promotions—and the less money the business has available to pay a penalty for calling in a worker when there’s unexpected demand. Scheduling mandates make it more difficult for businesses to access the workforce they need in order to grow.

Employees and employers shouldn’t be penalized for bad weather.

Severe weather already has an adverse impact on businesses because it suppresses demand and can impact inventory delivery. If businesses have to pay workers even when a store is closed or inaccessible to customers, they will take an additional financial hit. And for businesses built around outdoor recreation such as golf courses, outdoor swimming facilities or ski areas, the added costs could make it difficult to keep operating in bad years.

Employees and employers should be able to adjust to changes in supply and demand

Weather isn’t the only thing that can disrupt business operations. Demand is not always predictable, and for some businesses, it rarely is. A street closure, late delivery, or mechanical failure at a factory can quickly reduce sales and the need for workers. None of these things are within an employer’s control, yet scheduling mandates would create unfair penalties.

Employers and employees should have a say in setting and changing their schedules

Mandating predictability would make it more difficult for employers to collaborate with employees on flexible schedules. While some workers need as much certainty as possible in their work hours because of child care and other factors, there are also many workers who benefit from flexible schedules. A one-size-fits-all approach may help some workers, but it will hurt many others.