

Chair Taylor, Co-Chairs and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Melissa Palavecino and I'm here to support Senate Bill 828, the Fair Work Week Bill.

Having worked in retail for seven years I know how important scheduling is. During the last three years I worked for a retail store the inconsistency of my work schedule became a huge anxiety. I was a full time student who couldn't afford to just go to school, i needed to pay rent and food and everyday expenses.

When hired I was promised 15-20 hours a week, the reality was that i was given 8 to 10 hours.

When I insisted on being given the 20 hours i needed to be eligible for food stamps I was offered more on-call shifts.

The on call shifts ended up being even more of a headache, due to the fact that I would have to call in an hour before each shift to be sure they needed me. The days I was on call I couldn't make plans because there was no certainty I would not be working.

Many times i would be told to come in, however once there the store wouldn't be busy and I would be cut for the day.

Even while I wasn't getting enough hours the company hired more and more people with the excuse of needing more coverage on the floor, but really they just didn't want anyone to have enough hours to be eligible for benefits.

I struggled to make ends meet. The inconsistency of my hours had me always stressing on whether or not I would be able to pay rent that month.

My on-call shifts were not the only scheduling issues I had, I also had to deal with the constant shift changes the managers would make.

The most inconvenient part was that i would not be notified of such changes.

The schedule was usually made two weeks out, however I learned to check my shift every time I went in to work due to the many times I either missed a shift or came in too early or late for one because the schedule was changed without telling me.

The stress finally got to me, and I ended up taking out more loans for school so that I would be sure I could pay my rent and buy food. These are loans that I am still paying to this day.

In the end I just couldn't live on a day's notice. I was doing the right things by working and going to school, companies should have to do the right thing by providing decent schedules.

Thank you.