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Testimony before the Committee on Children

March 6, 2018

Regarding Raised S.B. No. 321 An Act Stabilizing Working Families By Limiting "On Call" Shift Scheduling

Good morning Representative Urban, Senator Moore, Senator Suzio, and members of the Committee on Children.

My name is Elizabeth Fraser, and I am the Policy Manager for the Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS). CAHS is a non profit agency that works to reduce poverty and promote equity and economic success for children and families through both policy and program initiatives.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of S.B. 321, *an Act Stabilizing Working Families by Limiting "On Call" Shift Scheduling*, to ensure that working families are guaranteed the scheduling predictability they need to thrive.

However, we urge the Committee on Children to modify the bill language by focusing on the sectors that are using "On Call" scheduling most aggressively, (specifically retail, foodservice, & hospitality), to give employees five days not 24 hours advance notice, and to guarantee employees at least eleven hours between shifts.

When work schedules change unexpectedly, working families may struggle to find reliable childcare, navigate transportation, or secure a second part-time job. Unpredictable and unstable work scheduling may take the form of "just-in-time" scheduling, in which hourly workers are called in based on fluctuations in consumer demand, highly variable "on-call" scheduling in which workers receive notice of their hours just days or hours in advance, as well as unpredictable month-to-month changes in hours that forces some employees into involuntary part-time work.¹ While these scheduling practices may help employers maximize profits, they harm the ability of working parents to provide their children financially while also meeting caregiving responsibilities.

Unpredictable, unfair scheduling practices most commonly impact workers in low-wage jobs,² and have a disproportionate effect on early-career hourly employees of color who report having less control over scheduling than their white coworkers.³ Black and Latino workers are also most likely to be paid hourly, and therefore are

¹ *The Schedules That Work Act: Giving Workers the Tools They Need to Succeed* (Issue brief). (2017). Washington D.C.: National Women's Law Center.

² National Women's Law Center, *Collateral Damage: Scheduling Challenges for Workers in Low-Wage Jobs and their Consequences* (Updated Apr. 2017), available at <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Collateral-Damage.pdf>;

³ Lambert, S. J., Fugiel, P. J., & Henly, J. R. (2014). *Schedule Unpredictability among Early Career Workers in the US Labor Market: A National Snapshot*. University of Chicago: *Employment Instability, Family Well-being, and Social Policy Network*, retrieved from < http://ssascholars.uchicago.edu/einet/files/lambert.fugiel.henly_executive_summary_b.pdf>

more vulnerable to unpredictable scheduling. In Connecticut, 77 percent and 76 percent of the Black and Latino workforce, respectively, are paid hourly in contrast to 52 percent of the White workforce.⁴

Connecticut's workforce, by race and gender

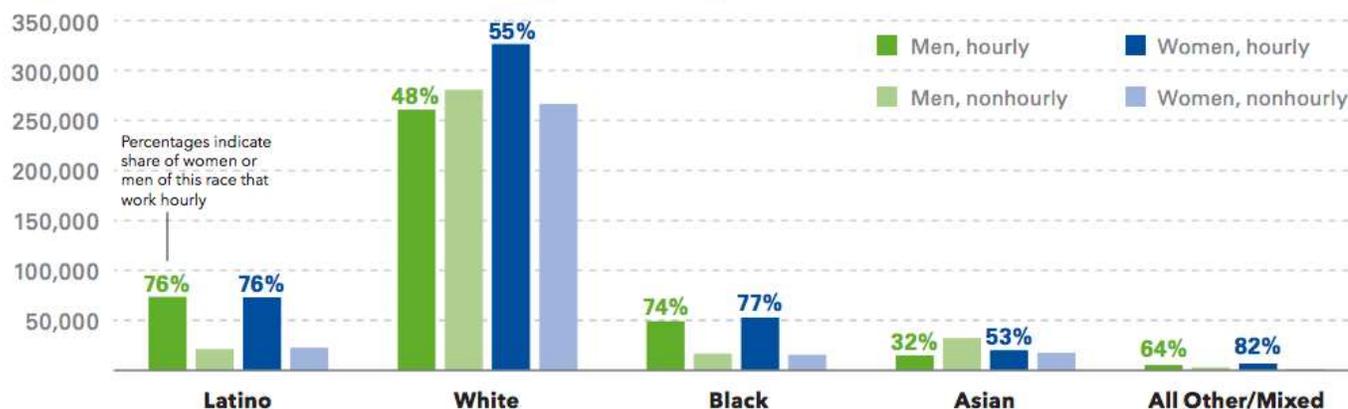


Figure 1: *Hourly Work and Workers in Connecticut* (Issue brief). (2017). Washington D.C.: Center for Popular Democracy- see note 4.

Financially, unpredictable work scheduling is harmful to the children and families of low-wage workers who are already under pressure to find enough hours to bring home a reliable paycheck. In Connecticut, 22 percent of workers over the age of 18 are in low-wage jobs, and statewide, 57 percent of all jobs are in hourly occupations that pay less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level.⁵ According 2015 estimates, 256,000 of Connecticut's 885,000 hourly workers were parents of children below the age of 18, 30 percent of whom were single parents.⁶ Without stable, predictable scheduling, parents who struggle to make ends meet through part-time work are often unable to pursue additional part-time employment or employment and training opportunities. In 2016, more than one in four Connecticut children lived in families where no parent had regular, full-time employment⁷, and more than one in six lived in low-income working families below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.⁸ Unpredictable scheduling makes it harder for the working-poor to get and stay ahead, trapping many Connecticut families in a cycle of multigenerational poverty.

Hourly workers who experience the financial strain associated with unpredictable scheduling may also be forced to pay for childcare arranged in advance of "on-call" shifts. Childcare is often the single-largest expense for families with young children, making it far out of the financial reach for many of Connecticut's working families without the Care4Kids subsidy.⁹ In 2016, the average cost of childcare in Connecticut was \$19,521, or 28 percent of the median household income for a family of four.¹⁰ When overly-flexible work schedules change at the last

⁴ *Hourly Work and Workers in Connecticut* (Issue brief). (2017). Washington D.C.: Center for Popular Democracy. Retrieved from <https://populardemocracy.org/sites/default/files/Hourly%20Work%20and%20Workers%20in%20CT.pdf>

⁵ Working Poor Families Project 2017 50 State Data Chapter 3_4-28-2017

⁶ *Hourly Work and Workers in Connecticut* (Issue brief). (2017). Washington D.C.: Center for Popular Democracy. Retrieved from <https://populardemocracy.org/sites/default/files/Hourly%20Work%20and%20Workers%20in%20CT.pdf>

⁷ "Children in low-income working families by age group, 2016 - Data Across States - KIDS COUNT Data Center." *KIDS COUNT Data Center*, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/5048-children-in-low-income-working-families-by-age-group?loc=8&loct=2#detailed/2/8/false/870,573,869,36,868/34,35,36/11455,11456>

⁸ "Children whose parents lack secure employment, 2016 - Data Across States - KIDS COUNT Data Center." *KIDS COUNT Data Center*, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/5043-children-whose-parents-lack-secure-employment?loc=8&loct=2#detailed/2/8/false/870,573,869,36,868/any/11452,11453>

⁹ <http://alice.ctunitedway.org/childcare/>

¹⁰ Schulte, Brigid, and Alieza Durana. *The New America Care Report*. New America, Washington D.C., 2016, *The New America Care Report*, [na-production.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/FINAL_Care_Report.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/documents/FINAL_Care_Report.pdf). Accessed 19 Feb. 2018.

minute, low-income workers must absorb the sunk costs of pre-arranged childcare or transportation plans *while* also struggling to recuperate their lost hourly-wage.

Variability in available hours and income can also contribute to increased parental stress, which can harm early childhood development and have lasting damaging implications for children's health and educational outcomes. In a 2014 national study of the work-life conflicts of female retail workers conducted by researchers at the University of Chicago, nearly half of the employees surveyed reported that their household incomes vary from week to week, and one-third reported that it is hard for them to pay their bills in a typical month.¹¹ The same study found that, independent of other factors associated with low-wage and retail work, unpredictable scheduling was associated with increased employee stress in and outside of the workplace. As documented by a growing body of literature, exposure to elevated levels of parental stress is associated with negative impacts on in-utero and early childhood neuroendocrine function, brain development¹², and cognitive ability,¹³ as well as an increased risk of adverse childhood experiences.¹⁴

Lastly, by reducing the quality time that parents can spend with their children, unpredictable scheduling further reduces the ability of low-income working parents to foster the nurturing relationships needed to counter the effects of toxic familial stress in early childhood. Given the substantial research which points to the importance of early childhood development on key outcomes later in life¹⁵, including educational attainment, workforce participation and attachment, substance abuse, positive parenting, and crime,¹⁶ it is clear that fair scheduling practices are essential to the multigenerational success of low-wage hourly workers and their children.

It is time for Connecticut to join forward-thinking legislatures across the country, including in New Hampshire, Vermont, Seattle, WA, and San Francisco and Emeryville, CA,¹⁷ in creating policies that give all employees the right to regular, predictable schedules. Passing this bill will provide profoundly needed stability to those workers that need it the most, strengthen our part-time workforce by making it more productive and reducing staff turnover, and provide Connecticut children with the opportunities, resources, and support they need to develop and flourish.

CAHS supports and appreciates the work of the Committee on Children in addressing the need for legislation to stabilize the schedules of hourly workers across our state.

For additional information CAHS's policy priorities regarding fair scheduling and working family issues, please contact me at efraser@cahs.org.

¹¹ Henly, J. R., & Lambert, S. J. (2014). Unpredictable work timing in retail jobs: Implications for employee work-life conflict. *ILR Review*, 67(3), 986-1016.

¹² Hanson, J. L., Nacewicz, B. M., Sutterer, M. J., Cayo, A. A., Schaefer, S. M., Rudolph, K. D., ... & Davidson, R. J. (2015). Behavioral problems after early life stress: contributions of the hippocampus and amygdala. *Biological psychiatry*, 77(4), 314-323.

¹³ Blair, C., & Raver, C. C. (2016). Poverty, stress, and brain development: New directions for prevention and intervention. *Academic pediatrics*, 16(3), S30-S36.

¹⁴ Steele, H., Bate, J., Steele, M., Dube, S. R., Danskin, K., Knafo, H., ... & Murphy, A. (2016). Adverse childhood experiences, poverty, and parenting stress. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science/Revue canadienne des sciences du comportement*, 48(1), 32.

¹⁵ Shonkoff, J. P., Garner, A. S., Siegel, B. S., Dobbins, M. I., Earls, M. F., McGuinn, L., ... & Committee on Early Childhood, Adoption, and Dependent Care. (2012). The lifelong effects of early childhood adversity and toxic stress. *Pediatrics*, 129(1), e232-e246.

¹⁶ Campbell, F. A., Ramey, C. T., Pungello, E., Sparling, J., & Miller-Johnson, S. (2002). Early childhood education: Young adult outcomes from the Abecedarian Project. *Applied developmental science*, 6(1), 42-57.

¹⁷ *The Schedules That Work Act: Giving Workers the Tools They Need to Succeed* (Issue brief). (2017). Washington D.C.: National Women's Law Center.