

# NEW JERSEY STATE AFL-CIO

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April 4, 2016

Dear Members of the Assembly Women & Children's Committee:

### **Re: Support for A-1117 (Oliver / Lampitt): The "Schedules that Work Act"**

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO express our support for this legislation and would like to thank the sponsors for their leadership.

As the corporate employment model continues to change in our economy, we are continually challenged to find a balance between the needs of employers to have flexibility in staffing and the needs of employees to jointly fulfill the obligations of their professional and personal lives. This bill helps to strike that balance and is long overdue.

Although the "traditional" family – a father who works outside the home and financially supports the children and a mother whose work is keeping the house and raising children - has been disappearing for more than a generation, our workplace and government policies have not kept pace with this reality. A lagging economy has complicated workers' lives even further, making it even more difficult to leave work for a family emergency knowing that the failure to be in compliance with employer demands could lead to unemployment.

We all recognize that employees are constantly being asked to do more for their employer, and often, unfortunately, are not fairly compensated, or worse, not compensated at all, for performing these additional requirements. Requests for employees to remain on call, to change their work schedules at the last minute or to cancel important personal matters are considered standard operating procedures for many large corporations, particularly in the retail and food service industries. The "big box" model of employment, in particular, has been troubling, as employees are treated as interchangeable parts, pieces to fit into a scheduling software program, with little to no consideration given to the inconvenience to them personally or their families, as well as the lack of financial compensation.

We recognize this bill will be met with the all-too-familiar, traditional knee-jerk opposition, stating "unintended consequences" and "excessive and costly mandates," and how if it passes, would chase employers out of the state. Let's be frank – this bill will not do any of those things. It embraces common-sense reforms that ensures workers' time away from work is actually their own time. And when they make a sacrifice to assist the employer, they should be duly compensated for that. This shouldn't be controversial whatsoever.

We encourage you to please hold strong in your commitment to this bill and reject requests to include carve-outs or requests to reduce the number of impacted businesses by increasing the employee threshold. The bill as presented here today is fair to both employees and employers alike.

Our only recommendations are to significantly enhance the employee notification requirements by employers and to add some detail and strengthen language concerning violations of the act. We are fearful that if enacted, some unscrupulous employers will do everything in their power to make sure employees are unaware of these protections and to that end, we would like to work with you to draft language strengthening these portions of the bill.

Thank you again for considering this bill today and we respectfully ask for your support.

Sincerely,



Charles Wowkanech  
President



Laurel Brennan  
Secretary-Treasurer

CW:LB:jmn  
OPEIU:153