



**Testimony to the House Economic Matters Committee
HB1226 - The Maryland Predictable Scheduling Act
Position: Favorable**

3/4/2024

The Honorable Delegate Wilson, Chair
Economic Matters Committee
Room 231
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

CC: Members of the Economic Matters Committee

Economic Action Maryland (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) is a people-centered movement to expand economic rights, housing justice, and community reinvestment for working families, low-income communities, and communities of color. Economic Action Maryland provides direct assistance today while passing legislation and regulations to create systemic change in the future.

I am writing to urge your favorable report on HB1226, the Maryland Predictable Scheduling Act, which would provide stability and reliable wages for workers of large companies, require employers to compensate their employees for altering their schedule at the benefit of the company, and establish practices that allow workers to more easily demonstrate their rights in the workplace.

Unpredictable scheduling takes a tremendous toll on both the personal and financial lives of employees. Large companies are able to prioritize profit over their employees in the short run through “just-in-time scheduling” and cutting hours last minute. [Nearly one in five](#) wage and salary workers over the age of 15 know their schedules less than one week in advance. Although it might seem arbitrary to some, unpredictable scheduling makes it impossible for many workers to make plans in advance, impacting their familial and social lives. This leads to disparities in mental health outcomes. One [study](#) found that employees with the most unpredictable schedules were twice as likely to report psychological distress than employees with stable schedules.

Unpredictable scheduling also impacts the financial stability of workers. [Three in four](#) hourly wage workers between the ages of 26 and 32 report that their hours fluctuate from week to week, which means that, not only are their hours unpredictable, but their income is too. Additionally, the fluctuation of hours often means that workers can lose access to social safety net programs like SNAP and TANF due to hourly work requirements. For example, for most workers to qualify for SNAP in Maryland, they need to work at [least 20 hours every week](#), with no averaging. So, if an employer decides to cut hours for just one week without an employee's consent, they lose access to both wages *and* SNAP benefits. This is especially problematic considering the racial disparities within this issue, with Black and Hispanic women being the [most likely](#) groups to face unpredictable scheduling.

The pandemic made it clear that essential workers keep our country running. They should be treated with respect and adequately compensated for their time and dedication to the companies they work for. This first fiscal quarter alone, Starbucks has made over [\\$1 billion in profit](#), yet they consistently practice



“just-in-time” scheduling and cut hours last minute to ensure profit maximization. The employers that this bill targets are not mom and pop small businesses, they are companies with over 500 workers that can afford to compensate their employees for these kinds of scheduling adjustments.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable report.

Best,
Zoe Gallagher, Policy Associate