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Budget and Taxation Committee  
Education, Business and  
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Pensions Subcommittee  
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Audit and Evaluation Committee

Children, Youth, and Families

Ending Homelessness

Fair Practices and  
State Personnel Oversight

Joint Committee on Pensions

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Senator Joanne C. Benson  
SB 345: Maryland Fair Scheduling Act

Good Afternoon Chair Griffith, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and members of the Finance Committee. I am here to present SB 345 The Maryland Fair Scheduling Act.

This legislation which is crucial to so many in our state addresses growing concerns, and indeed a growing crisis among working families. American workers increasingly need to balance employment with other responsibilities, but to what extent does the workplace accommodate these needs? The non-work responsibilities of the typical American worker have changed dramatically over the past 50 years. With the notion of covid-19 still looming and rising inflation, the common everyday necessities are becoming more scarce for middle to low-class workers. As a result, the fraction of households where all parents work full-time has nearly doubled, and the percentage of full-time workers who are parents in full-time working families has increased substantially. Due to the increase in inflation, there are more responsibilities to be had upon workers who are parents, especially regarding the increase in elderly life expectancy, while also dealing with the responsibility of children.

This bill's purpose is to require employers who employ individuals in a food service facility or retail establishment to pay certain employees at a certain rate of pay for certain shifts of work except under certain circumstances. This bill helps the working residents not to become inconvenienced by short-term notices from their employer regarding scheduling. By allowing employers to freely and unwarrantedly manipulate employees' schedules you disadvantage the employee who may have certain commitments or responsibilities, and in the end, do not have appropriate compensation. These commitments can include family, events, or even something as simple as travel time and money for employees to navigate their way to work. This is why it is important to grant compensation for the worker when they are asked to come into work unexpectedly to cover for any inconveniences the scheduling has caused. We as senators of this great state of Maryland have a time when we arrive at work that is set in

stone for the majority of our time serving. Retail workers and food service workers should be held to that same standard.

When these unpredictable schedules are put in place it makes it difficult for parents to meet their job and caregiving responsibilities. Furthermore, these practices are especially harmful to single parents. The collateral damage of this is we then have children, mainly the eldest sibling, if a part of a larger household, who then becomes the secondary caretaker of their younger sibling while the parent is out fulfilling a role that was inconveniently placed upon them. The child's responsibility thus increases, and a multitude of other things can begin to occur. Such as poor grades in school due to home life and increased stress. When hourly workers have workplace flexibility, productivity increases and absenteeism decreases. Productivity, retention, and reduced costs are important metrics for all businesses. The new era of workers and families will not stand for the iniquity given by employers, which is why we have recent events such as the 2022 "Great Resignation" in which employees have been resigning from their jobs in the masses just recently reaching record numbers. Long-standing dissatisfaction is one of the primary causes of this movement. Therefore, we must provide workplace flexibility and paid leave to strengthen our families, businesses, and economy.

Thus, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report for SB 345.