

Bill Number: HOUSE BILL 559

Position: Support (FAV)

Juliet Schor and Wen Fan
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467

We are writing to express our support for House Bill 559. Since 2022, we have conducted research assessing trials with organizations that implemented four-day workweeks without reducing pay. This study is in collaboration with 4 Day Week Global, University College Dublin, Cambridge University, and other global institutions. We collect survey data before, during, and after a six-month trial period, and again six months post-trial, allowing us to track changes over time within individuals and organizations. This approach ensures that our findings are not skewed by systematic differences among individuals or organizations.

The trials, involving 203 organizations and 3,695 employees from the US, Canada, the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, and other countries, have yielded overwhelmingly positive results. Organization-level benefits included a 9% increase in revenue, reduced absenteeism, and fewer resignations. The average organization rating for the trial was 8.3 out of 10. At the end of the trial, 81% of participating organizations expressed a desire to continue with the four-day workweek. Notably, these positive outcomes were consistent across different sectors.

Employees also reported significant benefits, including increased productivity and job satisfaction, as well as improvements in various well-being metrics such as reduced stress, burnout, and fatigue, and better mental and physical health, positive affect, and work-family balance. Specifically, many felt that they were more productive and doing a better job at work with the shift to a four-day week. More than a third (37%) of employees reported reduced stress, and 67% experienced a reduction in burnout. Forty-five percent noted increased job satisfaction, overall life satisfaction improved, and turnover intentions reduced slightly. Employees also sleep more, exercise more, and have more time to spend with their family or engage in self-care. Insomnia and other sleep problems declined by 13%, and the fatigue score fell by 15%. These positive changes persisted even six months after the trial concluded, indicating long-term benefits. Almost all (95%) employees wished to continue with the shortened workweek at the end of the trial.

Furthermore, the trial revealed that employees greatly valued the four-day workweek, with 13% stating that no amount of money could persuade them to return to a five-day schedule. Forty-nine percent reported they'd take a five-day job with a pay increase of 0-25%, and 28% would require a 26-50% increase.

In conclusion, the evidence from our study strongly supports the implementation of a four-day workweek for state employees in Maryland, as proposed by House Bill 559. The benefits are clear and substantial.