

Written Testimony for HB 559 / SB 569

State Employees – Four-Day Workweek – Implementation

Submission by:

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Thank you for allowing me to be present today to provide my support for the State Employees – Four-Day Workweek – Implementation Legislation. This legislation is a great step forward towards supporting all companies, organizations, and governmental entities in Maryland to provide a Four Day Workweek (4DW).

This is the time to move to a 4-day work week. The Ford Motor Company reduced its work schedule from 48 hours to 40 hours in 1926. This set the stage for the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1938 setting the 40-hour work week as the new standard. In 1956, then-Vice President Richard Nixon predicted people would soon enjoy a four-day workweek in the "not too distant future," leading to a "fuller family life for every American," as The New York Times summarized.

(<https://www.nytimes.com/1956/09/23/archives/nixon-foresees-4day-work-week-says-gop-policies-assure-fuller-life.html>)

There have now been many pilots of the 4-day work week in many countries including the United States with significant success. The studies can be found here for reference: <https://workfour.org/> & <https://www.4dayweek.com/> . WorkFour Research has found the following results when workplaces implement the 4DW (<https://workfour.org/workplace-benefits>):

Increased Productivity: Employers who have worked with their employees to adopt a four-day workweek, typically report increased engagement, higher quality work, and increased productivity.

Reduced Overhead Costs: Fewer days in the office means less money spent on utilities and office supplies. This can lead to significant savings over time. Just over half of companies who have adopted a four-day workweek find that it saves costs.

Improved Employee Retention: Offering a four-day workweek can make a company more attractive to potential employees and can increase job satisfaction, reducing turnover. Two thirds (63%) of employers said that providing a four-day workweek has helped them to attract and retain talent.

Improved Employee Recruitment: Organizations that transition to a 4DW report a significant increase in the number of applicants that apply to open positions—which in turn increases the quality of candidates that join your organization.

Enhanced Employee Health: Reduced stress and burnout can lead to fewer sick days and lower healthcare costs.

Reduced Employee Burnout: We are experiencing a burnout epidemic at all levels of organizations. 66% of employees reported burn out and 95% of human resources leaders say burnout is a significant cause of workforce turnover. Employees overwhelmingly feel happier and less stressed working a four-day workweek, reducing burnout, improving work quality, and increasing retention.

Improved Work-Life Harmony: A four-day workweek gives workers more time to spend with family, pursue hobbies, rest, and enjoy life outside of work. In a survey of 250 businesses operating on a four-day workweek, businesses reported their employees are happier (78%), less stressed (70%), and produce better work (63%).

More Time to Care for Loved Ones: With rising childcare and adult care costs, ensuring workers have time to care for their own families is increasingly important. A four-day week empowers workers not to sacrifice their work to care for their loved ones.

Reduced Commute Time: Fewer days commuting to work can save time and reduce transportation costs.

Increased Job Satisfaction: A shorter workweek can lead to increased job satisfaction, which can improve mental health and overall well-being.

Greater Focus and Efficiency: With more time to rest and recharge, workers can bring more energy and focus to their work.

As the CEO of a \$20 million not-for-profit organization with 173 employees, I have led and implemented the 4-day 36-hour work week for the entire organization with some staff working a 3-day 30-hour work week for our weekend services. This was accomplished without reducing pay and most benefits. The lessons learned from others which we implemented include:

- Not keeping 40 hours over 4 days but reducing hours to 36 hours with a goal of getting to 32 hours a week.
- Recognizing that 40 hours of work does not equate to the productivity and outcomes/results of an individual.
- Recognizing that adding some additional staff will allow services to continue and improve/enhance the work provided.
- Designating and organizing the same 4-day work week for all staff reduces stress and creates easy logistics to succeed in your business. This also creates a predictable work schedule which promotes strong work / life balance.

- Keeping compensation at the same level when moving to a 4-day work week equates to a significant increase in compensation including the worth and value of a person's time.
- Using the 4DW as a recruitment strategy to reduce turnover and burnout will yield results over time.

I hope that the Legislature will move in this direction to support all organizations towards the 4DW.