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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 994**  
**Maryland Predictable Scheduling Act**  
*Finance Committee*  
**March 12, 2024**

**Social Work Advocates for Social Change strongly supports SB994**, which will require food service, retail, and hospitality employers to provide advanced notice of work schedules, provide compensation for last minute scheduling changes, and require rest between shifts. This bill will provide predictability and stability to eligible employees in this industry. Studies tracking cities who have passed similar legislation have found that predictable scheduling ordinances have improved working conditions and well-being for employees.

**Unpredictable scheduling has been shown to negatively impact income stability, causing a variety of hardships – material and otherwise.<sup>i</sup>** Recent decades have seen increasing precarity in lower wage jobs including precarity in scheduling, with many workers in retail and food service jobs having regular uncertainty and instability in their work schedules from day-to-day and week-to-week. More than 60% of low-wage workers receive less than two weeks' notice of their schedules, and more than 70% report recent changes to scheduled shifts.<sup>ii</sup> This limits a worker's ability to plan ahead, manage healthcare, provide for childcare, work multiple jobs, or take classes to advance their careers. It also leads to wage instability – and so instability in a household's ability to pay for basic needs like housing and food, both directly and because of the benefits to which the household might be eligible.<sup>iii</sup> Such material instability has significant implications for one's health and wellness<sup>iv, v, vi, vii</sup> - and on one's family and children.<sup>viii</sup>

**Legislation like SB994 has been implemented successfully elsewhere with positive results.** Administrative data in Chicago has shown that employers provided advanced notice of schedules without negatively impacting the number of shifts and minutes allocated to workers.<sup>ix</sup> They also noted that the companies reviewed showed no change to hiring or turnover. A worker impact study conducted in Seattle after the passage of their Secure Scheduling Ordinance found an increase in two week's advanced notice and compensation for scheduling changes at the last minute lead to increased well-being and job satisfaction.<sup>x</sup> They found that the predictable scheduling increased job satisfaction. Workers reported improved sleep quality and a reduction in material hardships like hunger and housing instability compared to worker's in other cities.

Because of the many potential benefits of predictable scheduling, we believe it is time for Maryland to provide predictability and stability for its food service, retail, and hospitality employees. **Social Work Advocates for Social Change urges a favorable report on SB994.**

*Social Work Advocates for Social Change is a coalition of MSW students at the University of Maryland School of Social Work that seeks to promote equity and justice through public policy, and to engage the communities impacted by public policy in the policymaking process.*

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<sup>i</sup> Schneider, D., & Harknett, K. [Hard times: routine schedule unpredictability and material hardship among service sector workers](#). *Social Forces*, 99(4), June 2021, 1682–1709.

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>iii</sup> Hill, H., and Ybarra, M. 2014. “Less-educated Workers’ Unstable Employment: Can the Safety Net Help?” In *Fast Focus*. Madison: Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin.

<sup>iv</sup> Heflin, C. M. & Iceland, J. (2009). Poverty, material hardship, and depression.” *Social Science Quarterly* 90(5): 1051–1071.

<sup>v</sup> McCarthy, B., Carter, A., Jansson, M., Benoit, C., & Finnigan, R. (2018). Poverty, material hardship, and mental health among workers in three front-line service occupations. *Journal of Poverty* 22(4): 334–354.

<sup>vi</sup> Li Donni, P. (2019). The unobserved pattern of material hardship and health among older Americans. *Journal of Health Economics* 65: 31-42.

<sup>vii</sup> Tucker-Seeley, R.D., Li, Y., Subramanian, S.V., & Sorensen, G. (2009). Financial hardship and mortality among older adults using the 1996-2004 health and retirement study.” *Annals of Epidemiology* 19(12): 850–857.

<sup>viii</sup> Schneider, D. & Harknett, K. (October 16, 2019). Parental exposure to routine work schedule uncertainty and child behavior. Washington Center for Equitable Growth.

<sup>ix</sup> Kwon, C. & Raman, A. (2023, August 16) The effects of fair workweek laws on worker schedules: Evidence from Chicago. SSRN. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4542956>.

<sup>x</sup> Harknett, K., Schneider, D., & Irwin, V. (2021). Seattle’s secure scheduling ordinance: Year 2 worker impact report. Accessed at <https://shift.hks.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Seattle-Year-2-Evaluation.pdf>.