

Testimony: SB994 - Maryland Predictable Scheduling Act

Committee: Finance

Hearing Date: March 12, 2024

Position: FAV

My name is Kaili Nakanishi. I am a university student and part-time worker expressing my strong support for SB994 and advocating for my fellow hourly workers who may not have been able to submit testimony due to their demanding schedules.

Having worked several part-time hourly jobs, I can attest to the persistent issue of unpredictable scheduling that many workers face. During my four years at an outlet clothing store, many of my coworkers would lament about having to close and then open the store the next day. And while a small number of them chose to have that schedule, there were people who did not and could not decline working those shifts. As you might imagine, this was a very difficult schedule to have during the holidays, as there were times where we would get out at 1 am. At the same time, some of my coworkers had up to an hour drive back home. That meant they were getting home at 2am, sleeping for a few hours, and then having to be back at the store by 9 or 10 am the same day.

While attending school, I also work overnights at a fast food restaurant. There, the same type of issue arose. A good coworker of mine used to work overnight with me from 10pm to 6am; however unbeknownst to me, he was also working that same day earlier from 7am to 3pm. It wasn't until his request for his schedule to change finally went a whole month later that he was able to start working only the morning shift. That means that for a whole month, he was working from 7am to 3pm, going home and taking a nap for a few hours, and then coming back to work that same night from 10pm to 6am.

Working in the fast-food industry also highlights another challenge faced by workers—being cut out of shifts due to fluctuating rush hour demands. It's not uncommon for me or my co-workers to be sent home early or instructed not to come in for our scheduled shift based on the manager's discretion. When I first started working, this happened to me all the time. Just last weekend, one of my coworkers experienced this when he was unexpectedly sent home at the beginning of his shift. A measure like the one proposed in this bill, which would ensure at least half pay for the time we are unexpectedly told not to work, would have made a significant difference for both me and my coworkers.

Aside from the issue of "clopening," requiring employers to provide at least two weeks' notice for work schedules would greatly benefit workers. Until recently, my best friend worked at a chain restaurant where schedules were only provided once a week on Sunday evenings. She often stayed up late on Sundays, anxiously awaiting her schedule for the coming week, and begged me to stay up with her in case she missed it. There were instances when she received her schedule as late as 2 am on Monday, leaving her with little time to prepare for her shift starting at 9 am that same day. This uncertainty took a toll on her well-being and was one of the reasons that eventually led her to resignation.

In conclusion, I urge a favorable report on SB994, as it would significantly improve the lives of hourly workers by providing us with more predictable and manageable work schedules. Thank you for considering my testimony and for your dedication to addressing the needs of workers in our community.