

To: Members of the Connecticut General Assembly Labor and Public Employees Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of H.B. 5353, An Act Concerning a Fair Work Week Schedule. I support requiring employers to give employees at least two weeks' advance notice of their work schedules and to compensate employees for scheduled but unworked hours.

In August 2020, I began an hourly wage job at a grocery store in Fairfield County. I did not receive a regular shift schedule until February 2021. During those six months, I was placed on a series of one- or two-week long temporary schedules. I was only given my schedule four days in advance. If I had a conflict with one of my shifts, I was told that it was too late to change it. To avoid this problem, I regularly made attempts to receive my schedule at least a week in advance. I was always told that it was not possible to access my schedule at that time.

To make the situation more stressful, my employer regularly expanded the hours in which I could be scheduled and did not inform me until I received my schedule with four days' notice. When I began my job, I was told that shifts for my department would be scheduled within a certain time frame on specific days of the week. However, at least once a month, my manager would expand my department's hours of service and would not notify me until I saw my new shifts and inquired about the change. When I noted that I could not work those times because I had a conflict, I was once again told that it was too late to change the schedule. This put significant stress on me and could have been avoided if my employer were required to give at least two weeks' notice for scheduling and shift changes.

Additionally, I would regularly be sent home at least two hours before my shift was to end. Over time, this added up to hundreds of dollars of lost wages. After months of frustration, I left that position in favor of a different job that could give me consistent hours and advance notice of schedule changes. Moving to a job that is more respectful of workers' time and wages has decreased my stress and increased my job satisfaction.

Though my situation at my former job was challenging, it is even more difficult for thousands of employees across the state. I do not have childcare responsibilities. I have access to a car. As a white U.S. citizen, I do not fear retaliation or discrimination based on race, ethnicity, or immigration status when talking to my employer. This is not true for every hourly wage worker in the state. I implore members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee to vote yes on H.B. 5353 and to consider the effects of on-call and short-notice scheduling on the most marginalized in our state when casting your vote. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Catherine Bradley
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