

The Part-Time Worker Bill of Rights Act

Unpredictable and unstable work schedules make it nearly impossible for working families to balance their work responsibilities with personal and family needs. The fluctuation in hours and income makes it difficult for working families to manage their lives and their finances and to qualify or maintain eligibility for public benefits. Among early-career employees, [83% of hourly part-time workers and 79% of non-hourly part-time workers](#) reported at least some fluctuation in weekly work hours in the past month.

Across industries, over [two-thirds of part-time](#) retail and food workers would prefer full-time work. Underemployment is often an intentional strategy to boost short-term corporate profits at the expense of hourly employees – employers seeking to reduce labor costs [intentionally spread work among many part-time employees](#) so that they can save from paying higher wages and providing benefits.

A recent groundbreaking study found that unpredictable schedules are associated with [financial insecurity, housing insecurity, high stress, poor health outcomes, and, for parents, less time spent with children](#), which, in turn, leads to worse outcomes for children. One survey found that [65% of respondents](#) with part-time jobs had dealt with “at least one serious material hardship” in the past year. Workers facing these challenges are [disproportionately women and workers of color](#), especially as exposure to schedule instability is [16% higher](#) among workers of color compared to white workers. In many cases, these issues come from a lack of access to hours.

The Part-Time Worker Bill of Rights Act would address one of the primary issues that hourly workers face – work schedules that do not provide as many hours as they need to support their families – and provide additional protections and benefits for part-time workers.

The Part Time Worker Bill of Rights Act would:

- **Require large employers to offer available hours to current, available, qualified part-time employees before hiring new employees or subcontractors.** The legislation requires employers with more than 500 workers to compensate existing employees if they hire new employees instead of assigning new work to available, qualified, existing employees. This provision is based on successful access to hours ordinances in cities across the country, including those in Chicago, [Emeryville](#), California; [New York City](#); Philadelphia; San Francisco; [San Jose](#); Seattle and SeaTac, Washington.
- **Make more part-time employees eligible for family and medical leave.** The legislation guarantees any employee who has worked for their employer for at least a year access to federal leave protections under the [Family and Medical Leave Act](#).
- **Allow part-time workers to participate in their employers’ pension plans.** The legislation amends the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to give part-time workers who have worked at least 500 hours for two consecutive years access to retirement plans if they are offered by their employers to full-time workers.