

TO: Councilmembers Price, Buscaino, and Rodriguez, Economic Development Committee,
Los Angeles City Council

FROM: Anna Gassman-Pines and Elizabeth O. Ananat, Sanford School of Public Policy, Duke
University

RE: Findings from our research evaluating Emeryville, CA's Fair Workweek Ordinance

SUMMARY

- From May, 2017 to April, 2018 we gathered detailed survey data from a sample of working parents of young children, in order to evaluate the effects of the Emeryville Fair Workweek Ordinance (FWO)
- The Emeryville FWO reduced schedule instability: working parents reported a 35% decline in schedule instability after the policy went in effect.
- In particular, the Emeryville FWO reduced unanticipated changes in work hours, last-minute changes, and the addition of previously unscheduled shifts.
- The Emeryville FWO also improved family well-being.

BACKGROUND

In 2017, Emeryville, CA adopted the Fair Workweek Ordinance, which provides protections for hourly retail and food-service workers: two weeks' advance notice of their schedules and the right to decline last-minute shifts; compensation for changed or cancelled shifts; at least 11 hours of rests between shifts; and opportunities for full-time work.ⁱ The provisions of the Emeryville FWO apply only to large employers: for retail employers, firms with more than 55 employees globally and for food service employers, firms both more than 55 employees globally and 20 or more employees in Emeryville.

STUDY DESIGN

In Spring 2017, we recruited nearly 100 hourly workers with young children working in retail or food service in Emeryville. Half of the workers were employed in large firms covered by the Emeryville FWO and half were employed in smaller firms not covered by the ordinance. We then collected daily surveys via text message every day for three 30-day periods: prior to the Emeryville FWO going into effect (spring 2017); after the law went into effect during the "soft launch" phase (fall 2017); and during the full enforcement phase (spring 2018). This innovative methodology enabled us to measure schedule disruptions in real time and see how those disruptions impacted important measures of family well-being, including stress, sleep quality, parent-child interactions and child behavior.

To evaluate the law, we compared the schedule disruptions of those working in firms covered by the Emeryville FWO to those working in noncovered firms, both before and after the law went into effect.

RESULTS

The Emeryville FWO reduced schedule instability

Before the law went into effect, workers in noncovered firms had lower levels of schedule instability than those in covered firms: 11% compared to 14%. After the law went into effect, schedule instability was unchanged for those in the noncovered firms but dropped substantially – by nearly 5 percentage points – for those in the covered firms.

Across all types of schedule instability, the FWO policy reduced changes that occurred at the last-minute, with less than 24 hours' notice.

Effects of the policy were detected even during the “soft launch” period of implementation, though grew larger with full enforcement.

The Emeryville FWO improved family well-being

Working parents with young children, who find it particularly difficult to balance work and family, reported improved well-being after the law went into effect. In particular, the policy improved working parents' perceived sleep quality, a key measure of well-being, and reduced the likelihood that parents would lose their temper with their child.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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ⁱ <http://www.ci.emeryville.ca.us/1136/Fair-Workweek-Ordinance>.