

June 25, 2019

The Honorable Curren Price
200 N. Spring Street 420
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Councilman Price,

Human Impact Partners is a non-profit organization based in Oakland, working nationally to increase the consideration of health and equity in decision making, in order to transform the policies and places people need to live healthy lives. We endorse LA's Fair Workweek campaign and urge the Los Angeles City Council to pass a strong Fair Workweek ordinance that supports the health of working people in the city by ensuring they have predictable work schedules and sufficient work hours.

Our research has found that a precarious schedule for low-wage workers compromises their and their families' mental and physical health.¹ A precarious work schedule includes little advance notice of hours, fluctuating work times, inconsistent numbers of hours from week to week, and little to no employee input. Research in Los Angeles shows that these unstable conditions are pervasive for retail workers across the city.² A Fair Workweek ordinance would support a healthy Los Angeles by making sure that workers can earn enough income to support themselves and their families, and can plan for needs like education, childcare, and medical appointments without the stress of unpredictable schedules.

Unpredictable work hours and involuntary part-time work lead to unreliable incomes and economic instability.³ Los Angeles has pledged to raise its minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2020, but higher wages aren't enough if working people don't have access to sufficient hours. People who involuntarily work part-time are far more likely to be in poverty than full-time workers, and unstable hours left to the discretion of managers intensify financial strain, because unpredictable hours mean unpredictable incomes.^{4,5}

This is a critical public health issue, as no single factor is more important for healthy living than an adequate income, and none is more harmful to health than persistent poverty, which literally takes years off of people's lives.⁶ Working families who lack financial resources are forced to make trade-offs between paying rent and purchasing nutritious foods or necessary medical care.⁷ Lower incomes are associated with chronic stress and stress-related conditions like stroke and cardiovascular disease, and these negative health impacts accumulate the longer one lives with inadequate income.^{8,9}

Research on workers in multiple sectors also shows that unstable hours and a lack of employee control over schedules is associated with higher rates of stress and poor mental health outcomes — including stress-related tension and exhaustion, depression and anxiety.^{10,11,12,13} Precarious work hours also jeopardize the health of worker's families, leading to difficulty planning for child- or eldercare, and more frequent switching of childcare providers.^{14,15,16} Childcare instability in turn affects children's wellbeing, cognitive and behavioral outcomes and language development, especially for children in low-income families.¹⁷

In light of the negative impacts of unpredictable schedules, a Fair Workweek policy is an important opportunity to protect the health and wellbeing of Los Angeles workers and their families. We urge the council to adopt a strong ordinance and to show your commitment to high-road employment practices in the city. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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