

Workers' Accounts of the Fallout from Difficult Scheduling Practices

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This document was produced by the Schedules That Work Coalition, with contributions from: California Work & Family Coalition, 9to5, Center for Popular Democracy Fair Workweek Initiative, Center for Women and Work at Rutgers University, Communications Workers of America, Family Values at Work, Jobs with Justice San Francisco, National Women's Law Center, Next Generation, OUR Walmart, Restaurant Opportunities Centers United, Retail Action Project, San Francisco Legal Aid Society—Employment Law Center, United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, and Working America. For more information about any of the personal accounts contained in this document, please contact the person noted below each story.

California

Restaurant Worker on Split Shifts Had to Stay on Job Site and Wasn't Paid

Our client, a monolingual Chinese-speaking, immigrant worker and resident of Alameda County worked for a small restaurant as a cook between 2010 and 2013. The client was picked up every morning at 10 a.m. along with a group of workers from downtown Oakland/Oakland Chinatown by their employer and driven to the restaurant in Pinole, which was difficult to access by public transportation. She was scheduled to work six days a week between 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. and between 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. During her hour and a half break, our client usually stayed at the restaurant – as she didn't have anywhere else to go. She often spent the break with her coworkers in her employer's car taking a nap. After the restaurant closed, the employer would drive our client and other workers back to their neighborhood. Based on the employer's own time records, we recently filed a wage claim with the California Labor Commissioner seeking the split shift premium for 461 days, as she was a minimum wage worker, being paid \$8.00 an hour (in addition to other claims, including reporting time pay). Before the administrative process got underway, and even before a preliminary Conference (usually for settlement purposes) got underway, the employer paid the entire claim amount, totaling \$3,896.00, presumably because their own records spoke for themselves. This amount, while modest for most, will make a tremendous difference in the life of our low-income client.

Contact: cvigne@las-elc.org, Carol Vigne, Legal Aid Society-Employment Law Center San Francisco

First-hand Knowledge of the Advantages of a Predictable Schedule

My name is Josh Muller. I've been working in the restaurant industry for over ten years. Before coming to Zazie, I worked at Olive Garden in San Francisco for six years, during and after college. Scheduling was among the challenges I faced at Olive Garden. At that time, I was single and didn't recognize how important it was to have a set schedule. Now that I have a four-year-old daughter, my perspective is different; it's huge to have a predictable schedule.

When I was at Olive Garden, I usually got my schedule just a few days before my shift: the schedule for next week was supposed to be up the Friday before, but it's usually posted late on Saturday or Sunday. This short notice was frustrating - even as a single, working adult, I couldn't plan things in advance outside of work. My schedule was also different every week, and I would have absolutely no idea what shifts I would work. There were a lot of parents I knew who worked at Olive Garden, and I didn't know at the

time that this could be a huge problem for them; as a father now, if I didn't know my schedule at least a week in advance to plan for child care, that would bring a lot of stress on me.

I also noticed that sometimes we weren't scheduled for enough work. For instance, you would be scheduled for two days a week, and that's just not enough. Sometimes you're scheduled a certain shift, and your shift gets cut or cancelled - that's a big problem for your income. I would say that income instability for workers at Olive garden was directly related to the fact that we didn't get our scheduled shifts, and this was at a place where pay was already not so good.

I work at Zazie now where I get a fixed work schedule. This lets me know what days I can watch my daughter, or what days I need to find someone else. As a working parent, this was an unforeseen and important advantage in my job. It also brings me comfort to know that no matter what, I'm going to get to work the amount I'm scheduled. I can plan for vacations, time off, and child care. My wife who is also in the restaurant industry is able to make her schedule around my predictable schedule so that we both balance taking care of our daughter. This is a big advantage for us as working parents. And compared to Olive Garden, my income at Zazie is more stable because the amount I make has more to do with how busy the restaurant is on a given day, and less so to do with whether or not I'll get my shift every week. I *a/ways* know I'm going to get my shift; as a parent that's important and allows you to even plan your month on that.

Contact: jenya.cassidy@thenextgeneration.org. Jenya Cassidy, The Next Generation

My Schedule and Income Fluctuates, But My Bills Stay the Same

My name is Efuru. I've been working in hospitality at a large hotel chain for the past 14 years. With hospitality, it's always open 24/7, meaning I work on weekends, nights, and holidays. When folks say they get Memorial Day off, that means nothing to me because I'm going to be working. My work schedule varies: sometimes it's from 2 PM - 10 PM, or 12 PM to 8 PM.

I have two daughters, a six year old and a three year old. My three year old is in informal day care. With my work schedule, and without a car, it can be extremely difficult to arrange for child care, especially during the weekends or late nights. Child care is set up from 9 AM - 5 PM Mondays to Fridays, and not for parents with schedules like mine.

My income fluctuates based on the seasons. In my job, the busiest season is in the summer. During the summer, I'm basically guaranteed 40 hours a week, so I work longer hours to make more income. But the summer is also the time when my kids are out of school, which means I don't get to spend that time with them. During the winter time when my kids are back in school, I'm mostly out of work; I am on-call and work whenever my employer wants or needs me to work. Often times, I have to depend on the extra cash from the summer to make up for the loss in income during the winter.

As a working parent, child care is expensive. Even while my income fluctuates, I still have to pay for the same bills and the same amount of food. It's stressful not to have the stable income to afford those basic necessities. I've been meaning to go back to school for some time now, but with my work schedule and my kids, I don't know how I can do both. So I'm hoping that as my children get older, I can have more time and flexibility. A predictable schedule would mean a lot to my family and me: my kids would have more consistency, and I can be more involved in their schoolwork. It's hard to do those things when you're working from 2:30 PM to 10:30 PM. I want to be more involved with my kids and engage with them more. I know they're missing out on the parent involvement, and I know it's also essential for them to have that quality time and engagement from me when they're very young, like reading to them every night before bed. If I had a set schedule, I can make plans with my kids and be more involved as a parent.

Contact: jenya.cassidy@thenextgeneration.org. Jenya Cassidy, The Next Generation

Unpredictable Schedules and Short-notice Cancellations Made It Impossible to Plan

Brian Quick worked in retail for 4 years at Banana Republic, Marshall's, and most recently at Old Navy at the flagship store in San Francisco. At Old Navy, his schedule would come out on Thursday night for the week starting Sunday and would constantly fluctuate. "It's hard to plan anything such as doctor appointments when you aren't even sure when you work," Brian said. "Some weeks I would work 35 hours and the next I'd get 15 hours. How am I supposed to pay bills?" They would often cut his hours, sometimes calling him the night before he was scheduled to tell him he no longer had a shift. "One day I came into work and they cut my hours right then and there. Seems like everything is based on sales and not the well-being of the people who make the sales happen."

Contact: michelle@jwjsf.org, Michelle Lim, Jobs with Justice San Francisco

No Predictability

Kechell Jackson is a graduate of Cal State Dominguez Hills University, with a degree in accounting. After graduation, she was hired by an ice storage company as a part-time office assistant to help with billing, data entry, and other office tasks.

On any given day, Kechell does not know if or when she is working. "I have been there now for two years," she says, "It's a good thing I have a side job doing online work. My boss texts me an hour or two before she needs me, or to tell me not to come in at all. Some days I work three instead of four hours. It's very inconvenient not to have a set schedule. I wait around to see if I get called in or not, when I could be doing other things. Recently, I am only being called in a couple of days each week, and so I am looking for another job."

Contact: Lindam@9to5.org, Linda Meric, 9to5

Unpredictable Schedules puts a Strain on Families

My name is Andrea Ruiz, and I am a store customer service operator at a Target in Pico Rivera. I work for \$9 an hour on the day shift with two clopening shifts. On the nights I clopen, I get home around midnight, prepare lunches and clothes for my kids, and then fall asleep for 5 hours. I wake up, get my kids ready for the day, and then open the store.

We are supposed to get our schedules two weeks in advance, but I usually get it with less than a week notice. Because I have to set up child care, I often have to ask human resources to get my schedule. I have noticed business has not slowed down, but my hours were cut. Many of my coworkers and I recently got our hours cut. I went from 25 hours per week to 13 hours per week. I make ends meet now by picking up more hours wherever I can- by getting called in. But, those are last-minute notice; I get called in or maybe notified the night before.

Often whoever makes the schedule will make a mistake and schedule me on a shift that I have already established I am not available to work. Not only do they still expect me to work the shift, but—if I can't—I have to find my own replacement on my own time!

I rely on my family to care for my four kids and pay for child care when they can't watch them. Because I have to pick up shifts whenever I can, this strains my family members who get last-minute notice that I need someone to watch my kids, and if I can't find someone I miss out on that much needed money.

If I could rely on a reasonable set of hours of work without having to pick up shifts, I could work on going back to school. If I made a livable wage that would allow me to help out my family more and take the stress off of them by being able to pay for more child care instead of having to rely on them.

Contact: Contact: Joe Delgado, jdelgado@calorganize.org; Elianne Farhat, efarhat@populardemocracy.org, Center for Popular Democracy

Short Shifts and Insufficient Hours Made It Impossible to Plan

Jessy Lancaster worked at Ross in San Francisco as a part-time cashier. She made minimum wage. Living in one of the most expensive cities in the country, she wanted to work as many hours as possible. She made herself available six days out of the week, including Saturday and Sunday—but she was still only scheduled 10 or 12 hours a week despite repeatedly making her availability known to management. She would work shifts as short as four hours and never knew whether she would have to be at work early in the morning or late at night, or any time in between.

Contact: michelle@jwjsf.org, Michelle Lim, Jobs with Justice San Francisco

Colorado

Sent Home Early in the Restaurant Business

Working as a server in Colorado, Bridget would drive 15+ miles to get to work and would sometimes be told to go back home after only working an hour because the night was slow. As she worked mostly for tips, these nights cost her more to get to work than what she would earn in her shift. She didn't have another option for earning money for when she was let go early, so this would put her in a very stressful situation where she couldn't financially plan for the future.

Contact: Lindam@9to5.org, Linda Meric, 9to5

Being Kept Late at Work Meant Being Late to Day Care Over and Over

Nicole had no choice but to quit her job due to being forced to work extended hours. She was working as a bank teller in Colorado and was being held late, after the time she was supposed to end work, multiple days in a row. She has 2 young children she has to pick up from daycare and school by a certain time. She was arriving late to pick up her kids, which resulted in late fees and unpredictability for her kids. If she continued to arrive late picking up her kids, her youngest could have been kicked out of the day-care center. She unfortunately had to quit the job, leaving her family with no income.

Contact: Lindam@9to5.org, Linda Meric, 9to5

Connecticut

Two weeks' advance notice of schedules

Ciera Morán, Starbucks, New Haven, CT

Make the Road Connecticut & Center for Popular Democracy | Fair Workweek Initiative

Ciera has been working for Starbucks for more than 2 years. She is regularly scheduled for closings. However, her biggest issue is having to stay after scheduled hours because she does not have the support to close the establishment. Ciera is also working at another job. Until recently she was able to set her schedule so that she could work both jobs but recently her supervisor has started pushing back and scheduling her with no notice which affects her ability to work and puts a financial strain on her.

Contact: Julio Lopez, julio.lopez@maketheroadct.org, Make the Road, Ellianne Farhat, EFarhat@populardemocracy.org, Center for Popular Democracy

Unstable Hours make it Impossible to Get Ahead

My name is Jasmine Jackson and I live in Hamden, Connecticut. As an hourly worker, I live not only paycheck to paycheck but on a manager's scheduling whim. About a year ago, I attempted to enlist in the Air Force. I performed well enough on my tests to qualify for Officers' Training School. The recruiter told me that as a condition to enlist I had to make three payments on my student loans.

Back at work, the schedule came out and it had me working enough hours in one week for me to make a payment on my student loans. I was so excited I told everyone about my ability to pay my loans and head to Officers' School. Then, right before I was to start those hours, the schedule was changed and my hours were cut drastically. My plans to pay my loan fell through and I was unable to enroll in the Officers' School.

Currently, there is nothing a worker can do to make an employer give her the hours she was promised but when they are taken from you at the last minute, it is even worse. You find yourself thinking: "If I knew, I would have done this or that." You cannot plan with short notice scheduling. Fair scheduling guidelines will bring some accountability to employers and will help me and many others pursue our dreams without being afraid of what next weeks' schedule will look like.

Contact: efarhat@populardemocracy.org, Elianne Farhat, The Center for Popular Democracy

Workers Need Stability and Predictability to make Budgets and Plan

My name is Alisa Connell. Over the past 13 years, I have graduated from high school and received my Bachelor's and Master's degrees. Throughout this time, I have also been employed by Stop & Shop. As I seek opportunities to work on my area of studies, I continue to work at Stop & Shop to sustain myself.

As a part time associate, I am only guaranteed 15 hours of work a week. This means that my weekly check from Stop & Shop varies by \$100 based on what they decide to schedule me. As a result, every time I try to get ahead and create a savings account or pay extra on my bills, the next week my hours are diminished and I'm in worse shape than I was financially. Moreover, because of the lack of steady hours and advance notice, I have been forced to put my student loans into forbearance twice and continue to accrue interest on these loans while making interest-only payments.

If I knew in advance how many hours I was working in a week, it would be easier to then budget my expenses, plan for the future, and pursue my business. In order for me to prosper, to pay off my student loans, and to make a better living for myself, I need my employer to give me sufficient notice of my schedule.

Contact: efarhat@populardemocracy.org, Elianne Farhat, The Center for Popular Democracy

Part-Time Workers Need Access to Hours

My name is Elibel Garfias, and I have been working as a cleaner in Greenwich Office Park for 13 years. For over 10 years, I worked there part-time. Part-time workers cannot support a family. That's a fact. For someone like me, a mother with a school-aged son, it was hard to make ends meet and almost impossible to send money to my daughter who lives in Mexico. Thank God three years ago I was able to pick up more hours and become full-time. My life changed overnight. The worry about what bills to pay was gone. All of a sudden, I had health insurance, and being able to send money to help support my daughter and two grandchildren wasn't just a dream.

Now, my son just turned 18 and we are looking at how we get him to college. Three years ago this would have been unthinkable. We live modestly, but we can pay bills and rent, and I am even able to dream of a better life for my family.

Contact: efarhat@populardemocracy.org, Elianne Farhat, The Center for Popular Democracy

Florida

Unstable Hours Hard on Breadwinning Mom

Vanessa Ramos supports her three children, ages 10, 12, and 13, with a job at a fast food restaurant in Orlando, Florida. Although she's been there nearly two years, her schedule is sporadic, often working only 21 to 28 hours a week at \$8.09 an hour. Not having a predictable schedule and having so little money makes it hard to do much with her kids. She does not receive paid sick days and has called off sick only twice. Once they told her she had to come in anyway. "I rode the bus one hour into work only to find out that they had found a replacement," Vanessa said. In May, Vanessa joined the first ever fast food worker strike in Orlando's history.

Contact: wendy@familyvaluesatwork.org, Wendy Chun-Hoon, Family Values at Work

Georgia

Workers Need Advance Notice AND a Say in When They Work

My name is Caitlin Malia, and I am from Atlanta, Georgia. I've been working at Starbucks for one and a half years as a barista. We get two weeks advance notice of our schedule, which helps me plan ahead. However, that's not enough. Only a certain amount of people are allowed to request time off. It's first come, first serve, and our store is severely understaffed, so it's hard to get time off when you need it. Unfortunately, understaffing at my store has impacted my health.

One day, I had to work both the counter and the drive thru by myself, with one coworker in the back. Running back and forth without more support caused me to injure my back while on the job. I was out of work for almost three months and I now have a permanent muscle spasm- all so that Starbucks could save money by not giving us adequate coverage. To add to that, they wouldn't give me my workers' compensation paperwork until after the claims period was over. We need workplace protections to protect our health and safety.

Contacts: Erin Hurley, erin@riseupga.org, Elianne Farhat
EFarhat@populardemocracy.org, Center for Popular Democracy
Worker phone number: 914-629-9940

Juggling Two Part time Jobs and Still Struggling

My name is Cemillie and I live in Atlanta, Georgia. I'm a sales leader at Ann Taylor and a sales associate at the Gap. Neither one of my jobs give me enough hours to live on so I have to work at two different companies so that I can put myself through school. I'm studying public policy at Georgia State University, but since I need the money, I'm focused on getting as much work as I can- usually 50-65 hours of work a week between both jobs.

I have to make myself available for more hours because many times my scheduled shifts are canceled one hour before- Ann Taylor especially overschedules and then cuts hours. Luckily, Gap hasn't scheduled me for on-calls or two months. The flipside is that my hours have been cut tremendously- from 20 hours a week, down to four. I can't budget with such fluctuating hours and with such late notice of my schedule, let alone dedicate enough time to studying so I can get ahead.

We need advance notice, and protections to request time off, including paid sick days. I ended up in the hospital once so I called out sick. Because I couldn't get someone to cover my shift, I was considered a no show. Even though I produced a doctor's note, I was written up and almost fired. What was even worse is that I wasn't scheduled for the next week in retaliation for calling out. Many of us in retail are trying our best, working hard so that we can get more hours, just so we can pay our bills. We need workplace protections so that we have a fair workweek, live healthy lives, and graduate college.

Contact Erin Hurley, erin@riseupga.org; Elianne Farhat,
EFarhat@populardemocracy.org, Center for Popular Democracy
Worker's phone number: 617-259-9926

Adrian, Victoria's Secret, Atlanta, GA

Rise Up Georgia & Center for Popular Democracy | Fair Workweek Initiative

I've worked at Victoria's Secret since October 2014 as part of the stock team, but I work in all different parts of the store when they need me. The stock team is the bottom of the barrel- we get blamed for everything. It's hard to do our jobs when we don't know how much time we have to complete our tasks. Just last week, I had a regular shift from 2-6 pm, and an on-call shift from 6-8 pm. I don't ever know when I'll get home. Not only that, but that same day I ended up having to stay past 11:30 pm. I'm excited that Victoria's Secret announced they're ending on-call shifts so that I can have a more predictable schedule.

Contacts: Erin Hurley, erin@riseupga.org, Elianne Farhat
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Worker phone number: 901-820-6636

An Impossible Choice—Provide for or Care for Your Family

Joi Jackson works full-time at a Georgia call center. As a single mom with four kids, she struggles to get her kids to and from child care. Schedule flexibility to meet family needs at her place of employment is practically nonexistent.

She is faced with an impossible decision: keep her job so she can *provide* for her family, or quit her job so she can *care* for her family. "I would like to see fair schedules for parents with small children," Joi says. "Without this, people have to quit their jobs when they have no one else to pick up their kids."

When women have schedules that allow them to meet their family responsibilities, they are less likely to feel overloaded at work, less likely to be absent due to caregiving responsibilities, and more likely to be able to stay in their jobs.

Contact: Lindam@9to5.org, Linda Meric, 9to5

Illinois

Unstable Scheduling Leads to a Chaotic Life

My name is Tanya and I work in an assembly line in a frigid 36 degree warehouse chopping lettuce and other items to create grab'n'go foods destined for display cases in Starbucks, Costco, and Wal-Mart. I never know much in advance which days I will work, which hours, or even how long my shift will last. Sometimes I may be scheduled for an eight-hour shift, but get only four hours of work because my line's order is completed early. Other times, I am at work and on my feet for 12 hours. The unpredictability of my schedule makes it impossible for me to go back to school, which I desperately want to, because I can't commit to any class schedule. I can't even plan a budget for rent, food,

or transportation because I have no idea how much money I will make in any given month.

It is terrible when I finish the order early and am sent home without working my full shift. It is even worse when I punch out and hear my supervisor say, “We don’t need you tomorrow.” My heart sinks. It’s the last thing I want to hear. I only make \$9.25 an hour and sometimes I get only 25 hours a week- that isn’t even enough to pay my rent.

Contact: mjosephs@womenempoyed.org, Melissa Josephs, Women Employed

Planning Impossible Because of Last Minute Scheduling

I’ve been working as a Guest Service Agent at a hotel in Chicago for about 6 months now. I always get my schedule one week in advance. We’ve asked about getting it two weeks in advance but they won’t do that. My typical workweek is 6 days a week around 40 hours, but usually about one week of the month I’ll end up working up to a 9 day stretch because of how they’ll schedule my days off. Two months ago I requested 4 days off for early November (after it was approved by HR) to visit my family in Michigan, and management told me they didn’t know if they could give it to me and gave me a hard time about it. I reminded them again 3 weeks ago and it was the same thing; it wasn’t until October 30th that they finally told me I received the time off. It’s difficult because I’m never able to give a definitive answer for any plans with friends or family until the very last minute. I honestly don’t think it’s worth it anymore. It’s hard to take care of yourself on this kind of schedule. In fact, I’ve gotten sick more in the past 6 months than I have in the past 3 years.

Contact: ejohnston@nwlc.org, Elizabeth Johnston, National Women’s Law Center (The individual in this story asked to remain anonymous.)

Maryland

The right to make scheduling requests

David Valencia, Food service worker, Gaithersburg, MD
Casa de Maryland & Center for Popular Democracy | Fair Workweek Initiative

David is a hardworking 26-year-old seeking to improve his life here in the United States. He has lived in the United States for eight years, and has worked in the food industry that entire time. Unfortunately, his former employers exploited his work ethic and desire to succeed.

David worked 18-hour shifts, but was purposely kept from working 40 hours a week. In

addition, David worked back-to-back shifts, leaving him only six hours between shifts. One time, David was sent home for being five minutes late. Because David had to commute two hours total to and from his work location, those six hours of rest were really four hours. The lack of scheduling flexibility and compensation for working well over his scheduled shifts negatively affected David's health. David was overworked and underpaid, causing him a lot of stress. But most importantly to him, the unmanageable scheduling meant he was unable to pursue his dream of higher education.

David represents many other aspiring young people who are working to create an opportunity for themselves. For David, a three-week schedule notice and compensation for extra hours will greatly facilitate his dream of getting a degree in information technology.

Contacts: Kim Propeack, kpropeack@casamd.org; Elianne Farhat, EFarhat@populardemocracy.org, Center for Popular Democracy

Employer Scheduling Policies don't take Workers' Needs into Account

Tiffany Beroid worked at Walmart in Laurel, Maryland for almost 3 years as a customer service manager before she was fired after striking. She is the mother of two daughters. As a CSM at Walmart, Tiffany earned \$10.70 an hour, but she was only given an average of 20 hours per week. This is despite her classification as a full-time employee. She had to change her availability because she was not earning enough to pay for child care and it made more sense to take time off to care for her child. The national Walmart policy change allowing workers to access additional hours after the schedule is posted started at Tiffany's store with a series of petitions and delegations to the store manager.

While at Walmart, Tiffany experienced firsthand the difficulty of having little input into her work schedule. When her childcare provider became ill, Tiffany had nowhere to leave her children, and so she asked to be taken off the schedule for a week. Her manager refused. According to Tiffany, Walmart store policy required employees to file a temporary disability claim with Walmart's insurance carrier after calling out from work three times. If the claim is denied, the fourth time a worker calls out, store policy called for termination of the worker. Tiffany called out for seven days—each of the days her provider was sick. She also filed a temporary disability claim as she was required to do, despite knowing she would be denied. When this claim was in fact denied, she had to appeal all the way to the corporate regional office simply to keep her job.

Likewise, when Tiffany asked for a schedule that allowed her to go to school, she was told that if she limited her availability her hours would be reduced even though she was still available for more than 40 hours each week. While her manager ultimately agreed to make an exception on her case, she was told repeatedly how lucky she was—and that typically, if an associate did not have completely open availability she would not qualify for full-time work.

Contact: <mailto:lizbutler@gmail.com>, Liz Butler, Organization United For Respect (OUR Walmart)

Minnesota

Worker Required to Have Open Availability Still Can't Get Hours

My name is Jill Ernst. When I interviewed at J.C. Penney in Minnesota, part of how I got the job was that I had to have a very flexible schedule. I was open all seven days of the week but now they only give me less than 35 hours. If they give me less than 34.5 hours it's a struggle to pay rent and my bills. If they put me on the schedule for 28 hours I have to figure out how to convince my manager to give me more hours or find someone who is willing to give up hours. My schedule is so inconsistent that if I need to take P.T.O. for one day, I know that I'll have to take the entire week off, or I'll be scheduled a bunch of short days and not be paid for that one day off, no matter how few hours I actually worked that week.

Contact: bhalverson@workingamerica.org, Brianna Halverson, Working America

Call-In Shifts Means the only Plans Workers can Make are those they can Break

My name is Katrina and I am from St. Paul, Minnesota. work at White Castle where I make \$8/hour. We get our schedules every Saturday for a workweek that starts on Sunday, so sometimes I get my schedule only a day in advance. Everyone is on call two days a week, and it's not uncommon to be scheduled for the other five days. Between on call shifts and scheduled shifts, I sometimes don't have a day off for two weeks at a time.

This schedule makes it really difficult to baby-sit my nephew. My sister is in college, and it's hard to raise a kid and be in college at the same time. My mom works. So sometimes I'm the only one who can take care of my nephew. But White Castle doesn't care about family obligations. The only excuse they accept for not coming in is being sick--for one day. After that you have to bring a doctor's note. If you call in for any other reason, they'll give you three "lates." After nine lates you get suspended, and after 12 you get terminated. I need a job that lets me plan my schedule and take care of my family.

Contact: Becky Dernbach, becky@mnnoc.org, Elianne Farhat, EFarhat@populardemocracy.org, Center for Popular Democracy

Workers Need to Know how many Hours they can Expect to Work

When Randa Jama, a member of SEIU Local 26, first took a job as a wheelchair attendant with AirServ, a Delta airlines subcontractor, at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport last fall, it had been a full-time position. Then, her employer suddenly cut her hours to only 12 hours a week. “They told me that you’re working only Saturday and Sunday from now on.” Her supervisors would still sometimes ask her at the last minute to stay late or do an extra shift. But she can’t work at such short notice even though she needs the hours, because she had to cut back on her babysitter: “I let them go because they can’t just wait for me to get full-time. Now that I want to work full-time, I can’t because obviously I changed everything,” Jama says.

Contact: efarhat@populardemocracy.org, Elianne Farhat, The Center for Popular Democracy

New Mexico

Having No Say in Work Schedules Doesn’t Work for Caregivers

My name is Ashley Wells and I worked at a T-Mobile call center in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Like many call centers, T-Mobile uses a scheduling procedure commonly known as “shift bid,” where workers bid for their shift for the coming months. Shift bids are based solely on performance over the previous six months, and occur every six months.

For about a year, I worked an early morning schedule. My life, and my family’s life, was scheduled around my work hours. But, when I received the results of my September, 2014 bid, I was told I was being moved from the opening shift (Monday-Friday 5:45am-2:15pm) to one of the “weekend wrap”, closing shifts that occurred Friday-Monday. My husband already worked nights, to split up child care, so the only way I could work those shifts was if my husband left his current job and stayed home with our daughter at night. I made every effort to swap shifts with another worker, but in the end could not. Because my husband’s job was more reliable, I left my job—even though my job paid more, it was just too inconsistent and unreliable. We had to cut down on their daughters preschool because they could no longer afford tuition, with me unemployed.

Contact: jnewman@cwa-union.org, Jessica Newman, Communication Workers of America

Having No Say in Work Schedules Doesn’t Work For Students

My name is Luis Castaneda and I work at T-Mobile’s call center in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I am currently on morning shifts: Sunday-Thursday, 5am-2pm. I am married with two little kids, and I am trying to finish college. But, because of my schedule, I cannot attend classes at either of the two universities in Albuquerque. In fact, there is not a single shift in the call center that would enable workers to attend classes in person. As a result, workers can only take classes online. I am still going to graduate,

but not with the degree I wanted because some of those classes required attendance on campus.

Contact: jnewman@cwa-union.org, Jessica Newman, Communication Workers of America

Control over Schedules is Critical to Managing the Demands of Life

My name is Nancy Chacon and I have worked at the T-Mobile call center in Albuquerque for over a year. I like my job, except for the pressure I feel at the end of each month. I know I need good numbers to have a chance at a schedule I can actually work. This is especially important to me, because I have a family and I am trying to finish my degree. T-Mobile doesn't make it easy. Once, I needed a day off for a school exam and a doctor's appointment. I requested the day off three months in advance—as soon as I knew the exam date-- but it was still denied.

Contact: jnewman@cwa-union.org, Jessica Newman, Communication Workers of America

New Jersey

Denied a Schedule Change Needed to Care for Sick Wife

My name is Armando, I live in New Brunswick, New Jersey and I am a member of New Labor. I worked for three and a half years at a gas station. I worked nights 7 days a week, with a day off every three months. I worked 46 hours a week and did not get paid overtime. In 2007 my wife Silvia developed eye problems and would have a lot of doctor appointments. When my wife had her operations, I asked to be able to leave work early so I could be with her. My employer said no. So I would leave work at 6 am, leave the house with her at 7 and go to the hospital, and then I would come home at 7 at night and sleep for 2 hours before going to work, all because my employer would not give me permission to leave work early to be with my wife. But though I might be tired from work, I never left my wife alone, and I would take her to her doctor appointments and operations. When I filed a complaint with the Department of Labor my boss told me, "Armando, you're a good worker. I like your work but what I did not like was you filing a complaint with the Department of Labor." So I was without a job.

Contact: yarrow@work.rutgers.edu, Yarrow William-Cole, Center for Women and Work at Rutgers University

Couldn't Even Schedule a Doctor's Appointment

My name is Josefa, I am a member of New Labor. I live in New Brunswick, New Jersey and I have a 5 year old daughter. I work in a restaurant in the kitchen and sometimes as a cashier. I scheduled a doctor's appointment for my daughter and when I asked off for

the appointment, work refused to let me off, so the day of the appointment I had no choice but to leave work an hour early, but then I returned to work a few hours later, even though my shift was over because they called me back in.

When I became pregnant I had to take two months off work unpaid. When I returned to work, I asked for the morning shift. They said it was fine but only for about two weeks, then they moved me to work in the evenings from 5 to 9pm. It was difficult because I had to travel to work. Sometimes I had to spend almost more than I earned in transportation, cabs are so expensive so I had to travel by bus which took a long time. So after working like that for a week, I talked to my boss and let him know it was really affecting me and my family because I wasn't making enough money. And I was a good worker; I had worked there almost five years. But I could see they were not interested in how good of a worker I was or how long I worked there. I asked him if he could give me more hours or at least switch my shift, but he said no. He told me, "You want to stay, fine, but if you don't like it then go." I told him I did not like it so he told me to punch out and go home. I felt really bad because I liked my job. It was actually painful. And things like this don't just happen to me, they happen to many others. We just make enough to pay the babysitter and rent, but there are so many expenses. And I was a single mom so it was very difficult for me.

Contact: yarrow@work.rutgers.edu, Yarrow William-Cole, Center for Women and Work at Rutgers University

New York

Hours Cut By a Third, Just for Asking for a Different Shift

My name is Melody Pabon. I've been working at Zara, a women's clothing store in Manhattan as a cashier and on the sales floor for about four years. I also just started school to become a medical assistant. I used to be scheduled to close the store a lot. On those nights I got home to Brooklyn after Mason, my four-year old, was already asleep. I wanted to be able to spend time with him in the evening, so I asked for an earlier shift. But at my job, anyone who is not available 24/7 always seems to get their hours cut. And that is what happened to me. I went from working 35 hours to 25 over the course of a few weeks. That's almost a third of my paycheck. Mason was in a day care center that we both loved. He got so much attention from the teachers there and he had friends. But with so few hours, I couldn't afford it any more and I had to pull him out. Right now I'm getting most of my shifts with only one or two days' notice; sometimes even the same day. Then I have to check with my family or my boyfriend to see who can watch Mason. My boyfriend wants to help out as much as he can, but his schedule is unpredictable too so that makes it hard. I'm sad for Mason that he's always bouncing around and that he doesn't get to be with his day care buddies and teachers any more. Mason deserves better and so do I.

Contact: anika@frontlinetail.org, Anika Campbell, Retail Action Project

Struggling with On-Call Shifts

My name is Sonsira Espinal. When I was a sales and merchandising associate at Madewell in New York City, I was scheduled for more 'on-call' shifts than actual shifts each week, so I only knew two hours before if I have to work that day. It was impossible, both financially and logistically. When I started my job, I was told I would work at least 20 hours a week. Then, I started not even getting half of what a part-time job really is. It was like signing my life over to the devil. The company's strategy is to give little four-hour jobs to more people, rather than give stable 9-to-5, Monday-through-Friday jobs.

Contact: anika@frontlinetail.org, Anika Campbell, Retail Action Project

Unstable Schedule = Unstable Child Care

I'm Akaisa O'Kieffe, a single mother who works as a stock associate for Uniqlo in New York City. The amount of hours and days I work changes on a weekly basis, so I never know how much my check will be. Without a set schedule, finding child care for my daughter can be incredibly stressful. And with fluctuating income, I can't afford to pay for consistent childcare. I live with my mother, sister, and my daughter, and my wages go toward supporting all of us. When I don't know how much money I'll be bringing home in a given week, that means I don't know how much I can contribute to rent and bills, how much food I can buy for my daughter, or whether I can even afford to do laundry that week. I want to have access to full-time work and be able to provide for my daughter. Major retailers like Uniqlo can afford better.

Contact: anika@frontlinetail.org, Anika Campbell, Retail Action Project

Denied One Night Off to Go to School

I have a nursing job at a hospital in New York City, a 6 year old daughter and I'm in school to become a certified nurse practitioner. When I asked for one evening off per week from my job at the hospital to take a class, I was told I would have to be there 6 months before I could get one evening off. This was for no reason other than that it was policy to deny workers a set time off in the first six months. I had to delay starting my program for six months, and now I'm six months behind. So at some point, I'll have to double up and take two classes in one semester, while working full-time with a young child. I don't know how that's even possible, since it would mean needing 2 evenings off the schedule per week; the idea that I'd be allowed that is a pipe dream.

Contact: ejohnston@nwlc.org, Elizabeth Johnston, National Women's Law Center (The individual in this story asked to remain anonymous.)

Texas

Limiting Availability Led to Less Desirable Shifts

Christina Acevedo, a single mother of three and caregiver to her mother, picked up a second job at El Toro Mexican Restaurant in Clute, Texas. She needed to supplement her part-time income. She quickly learned that workers without outside obligations were openly praised for their dedication and given the most desirable shifts and sections. Christina paid the price for having family responsibilities and a second job. Despite clear, written limits on availability, she was often scheduled during times she was not available. She was then expected to either work those shifts, find someone to cover the shift, or be written up. This was especially difficult because she received her schedule with extremely short notice—the schedules, which started on Sunday, was usually posted on Saturday at closing. When Christina tried to talk to her manager about her need for a more predictable schedule, her manager mocked and bullied her in front of the other staff, telling her she should be more like her coworkers who were available around the clock. Eventually she quit.

Contact: ejohnston@nwlc.org, Elizabeth Johnston, National Women's Law Center
Virginia

Inconsistent Hours Mean Workers Struggle to Meet Expenses

My name is Fatmata Jabbie. When I started at a Walmart in Northern Virginia, I didn't realize that my low wages, along with my erratic hours, wouldn't be enough to pay my bills. Even three raises later, I am still making just \$9.00 an hour as a cashier. I love working with customers, but my hours change so much that I am forced to turn to the government to help me cover my rent and care for my two young children.

I want full-time hours and have asked many times for more, but my schedule remains all over the place and my hours are inconsistent. Some weeks I work 36 or 26 hours, while other weeks it is as few as 18, which means my take-home pay is less than \$200 each week. With too few hours, I struggle to cover the basics, let alone diapers and clothes for my fast growing toddlers.

Contact: efarhat@populardemocracy.org, Elianne Farhat, The Center for Popular Democracy

Washington, D.C.

Unpredictable Hours Make It Hard to Make Ends Meet

Sandy Kossangba is a restaurant worker in a Washington, D.C. restaurant. She is struggling to secure a schedule that allows her to work two jobs. She also routinely experiences cuts in hours when business is slow and has difficulty predicting her income in any given month. Being scheduled for call-in shifts and last-minute shift

cancellations are also the norm. She is afraid to make any scheduling requests because she knows that may cause her to lose hours. She usually gets her schedule less than one week in advance. Although she's often scheduled from 12 to 8, she and her colleagues get sent home early when business is slow. Sometimes she's sent home as punishment for perceived infractions. For example, a guest asked to be seated at the back of the restaurant away from a crying baby. When the manager later moved the guest to the front, Sandy asked why, explaining the guest asked to sit in back. The manager responded by sending Sandy home. Sometimes Sandy is required to call her coworkers and tell them not to come in because the restaurant is slow. Many servers try to have two jobs to make ends meet, but it is hard to arrange with the scheduling.

Contact: jordan@rocunited.org, Jordan Budd, Restaurant Opportunities Centers United

Wisconsin

Two Weeks' Notice is Important to Workers

Spencer Sartin, Target, Wauwatosa, WI

Wisconsin Jobs Now & Center for Popular Democracy | Fair Workweek Initiative

One of the hardest parts about working at Target is the way they schedule. I don't have a set schedule and never know when I have to work, so my life outside of Target is unmanageable. I have no say in my own schedule so it's impossible to have a second job, yet they won't schedule me for full time.

Contact: Lisa Lucas, lisa.lucas@wisconsinjobsnow.org

Sometimes Going to Work Costs Workers Money

My name is Mary Coleman. I work at Popeye's in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I ride two buses to work and it takes me an hour each way. Sometimes I get to work only to be told they don't need me. They tell me to go home. And sometimes I work for an hour or two of my shift and then I'm told to go home because business is slow. It's hard to be treated this way. I work because I need the money to support myself and my grandkids. But when I get to work only to be sent home again, I don't make any money at all. Actually, I lose money—because I have to pay for the bus. And I have to give up on making any other plans for that day. I've got a lot of people counting on me. My daughter is sick so when I'm not at work, I'm usually taking care of my grandkids. It's really tough to juggle all of the demands on my time when Popeye's has no problem wasting it.

Contact: lisa.lucas@wisconsinjobsnow.org, Lisa Lucas, Wisconsin Jobs Now

Reporting time pay/ on-calls

Jordan Kaster-Schultz, Urban Outfitters, Milwaukee, WI

Wisconsin Jobs Now & Center for Popular Democracy | Fair Workweek Initiative

We have on-call scheduling at Urban Outfitters. I have to call-in to my store on the day of my potentially scheduled shift to see if I am supposed to work, so I only get two hours of advance notice for my job. They only post the schedule a few days ahead of time, and sometimes, it comes out after I was already scheduled at my second job. I don't know what to do—I need both jobs to make ends meet.

Contacts: Lisa Lucas, lisa.lucas@wisconsinjobsnow.org, Elianne Farhat
EFarhat@populardemocracy.org, Center for Popular Democracy