



Testimony Regarding H.B 6859, An Act Concerning Predictable Scheduling

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Labor and Public Employees Committee

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Dear Senator Kushner, Representative Sanchez, Senator Sampson, Representative Ackert, and esteemed members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee,

Thank you for accepting this testimony **in support of HB. 6859** on behalf of Health Equity Solutions (HES), a nonprofit organization with a statewide focus on advancing health equity through anti-racist policies and practices. Our vision is for every Connecticut resident to attain optimal health regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.

Retail, food, hospitality, and other customer service workers are the backbone of many of Connecticut's largest industries. Yet, for the nearly 250,000 customer service workers in our state securing a steady stream of income is near impossible due to unpredictable work scheduling which makes it extremely difficult to work adequate hours when holding multiple jobs. 65% of customer service workers report irregular work schedules, and 50% report their work schedule provides inadequate flexibility to address family needs.¹ For those paid an hourly wage, scheduled hours are directly linked to earned income, and many hourly workers are unable to make ends meet or predict their monthly income.

Due to systemic racism, and related discrimination in education and employment, people of color are overrepresented in the service sector and are more likely to be negatively impacted by unfair scheduling practices. Black and Latino/a employees in Connecticut are far more likely to be underemployed, work in high-risk jobs, and have less flexibility in their work schedules.² ***Improving workweek standards is one step toward bridging the racial wealth gap and improving economic security among lower-wage workers.***

Each year, HES conducts community conversations to inform our policy agenda. The ability to afford and access basic needs is consistently among the top health equity priorities for Connecticut residents.³ When income is unstable, families struggle to afford necessities like food and housing. Consistent scheduling is necessary to juggle multiple jobs and to maintain a dependable, predictable household

¹SHIFT. *Working Sector in Connecticut*. (2018) Retrieved from:

<https://shift.hks.harvard.edu/working-in-the-service-sector-in-connecticut/>

² Data Haven. *Toward Health Equity in Connecticut*. (2020). Retrieved from:

<https://ctdatahaven.org/sites/ctdatahaven/files/DataHaven%20Health%20Equity%20Connecticut%20061820.pdf>

³ Health Equity Solutions. *Health Equity Solutions 2022 Community Conversations*. (2022) Retrieved from:

<https://www.hesct.org/blog/2022-community-conversations-final-report/>



income. Currently, 37% of service workers in Connecticut report weekly fluctuations in income due to unpredictable hours, and 27% report difficulty paying bills.¹

Employment is a determining factor in overall health outcomes. Job insecurity, low wages, and underemployment are linked to higher rates of depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, worry, and demoralization.⁴ Unfair scheduling practices have been shown to have negative impacts on quality of life and many workers report work schedules as causes of high stress for them and their families.¹

Connecticut working families deserve to have jobs that give them a chance to thrive and prosper. Fair workweek standards can improve the overall quality of life for workers and their families and increase their ability to afford necessities like childcare, housing, and food.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in support of H.B. 6859. We can be reached with any questions at hwebley@hesct.org or 860.937.6437.

⁴ Healthy People 2030. *Employment*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health/literature-summaries/employment#cit26>