

Workers, Advocates and Employers Weigh in on Fair Scheduling Practices

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Minimum wage rates across the nation differ from state to state. As employees fight to raise rates, they are now being faced with another issue, scheduling practices. So how does this affect employees both locally and nationally?

"What we're seeing is a rise in part time hourly workforce that frankly doesn't have the type of stability in their scheduling that's needed to earn enough to survive," said Derecka Mehrens, Executive Director at Working Partnerships USA.

According to an article by CBS News, there are over 6 million people who are stuck in part time position who want to be working full-time. Workers advocates say that even if pay were to increase, hours still matter.

"Every hour counts when you're getting paid by the hour. If you don't get [enough], you know maybe it could be that you got five fewer hours in a week that could mean paying rent or not, [or] eating or not," said Carrie Gleason, Director of The Center for Popular Democracy's Fair Workweek Initiative.

As of January 1st our state minimum wage rate increased to \$8.75. While working full time at that rate would place an individual above the poverty line, for families with three people or more it does not. Still local business owners say the number of hours they can offer is dependent upon business.

"More hours is just totally dependent on how much business your business is doing. You know it's not really the employees decision. It's rather or not, you know the business has a demand to bring on another employee or increase someone's hours," said Eric Leaseberg, owner of The Bluebird.

One solution that workers advocates believe could resolve this, is for employers to offer part time employees more hours before hiring new employees. They believe not doing so will continue to keep employees behind.

"The impact of this practice of not offering your hours to existing employees before hiring new employees is hurting families and hurting our communities," said Mehrens.

Most local business owners 5 News spoke with say they would have no problem offering full time hours if the person is a hard worker. As for workers advocates they are now working with state policy makers across the nation to have workplace protection policies put in place to insure fair scheduling practices.

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