

Portland City Council passes fair scheduling resolution

Portland City Council unanimously passed a resolution Oct. 12 encouraging all Portland employers to review their scheduling practices and consider changes that ensure predictability for employees. The non-binding resolution was submitted by Commissioner Steve Novick.

Prior to the Council meeting, more than 50 supporters of fair scheduling laws rallied outside City Hall. The rally was organized by the Oregon Working Families Party. Speakers included Tom Chamberlain, president of the Oregon AFL-CIO, and Jeff Anderson, secretary-treasurer of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555.

Fair scheduling laws are the next front in the fight for workers' rights. They've already passed in Seattle and San Francisco, and New York City is considering passing one.

"The recent victory (in Oregon) on an increased minimum wage doesn't mean much without a predictable schedule to rely on for that wage increase," said Oregon Working Families Party State Director Karly Edwards. "We are at the next and most essential phase of these organizing efforts, because scheduling practices are an essential part of any job."

During testimony before City Council, retired Portland State University economics professor Mary King said that providing people with very little notice of an ever-changing work schedule, demanding that employees be 'on call' without compensation, or sending them home hours



FAIR SCHEDULING RALLY AT PORTLAND CITY HALL. Carly Edwards, director of the Oregon Working Families Party, speaks to a coalition of fair scheduling groups at a rally Oct. 12, ahead of the Portland City Council's vote on a fair scheduling resolution. The resolution, which passed unanimously, encourages all Portland employers to review their scheduling practices and consider changes that ensure predictability for employees.

early on slow days means that Oregon workers are increasingly struggling for financial stability, stable care arrangements for their children, medical care, and sleep.

"Our labor legislation needs to catch up with new software that facilitates employers in treating their workers as if they were inanimate inventory, rather than people," King said.

Businesses today are using computer software to predict customer volume based on things like weather forecasts, and then making last-minute schedule changes — or requiring workers to be on-call. Such

practices trim labor costs by dumping business risk onto workers.

Jacob Bureros, who addressed City Council, said he often works 12-hour shifts, then gets called in to work again just a few hours after finishing a shift.

"Even for a young healthy guy, this became too much to

endure," he said. "A 12-hour shift followed by four hours of sleep only to be called into work a 16-hour shift as a regular mode of operating wore on my health and sense of well-being."

The coalition was hopeful that Novick, the resolution's sponsor, might offer an amendment at the Council session that

would require contractors doing business with the city to give workers advance notice of how many hours and when they are scheduled to work, but that didn't happen.

The Oregon Legislature last year preempted all cities from adopting fair scheduling ordinances until July 2017. The moratorium was part of a compromise to get votes for the Oregon paid sick leave law.

"If the Legislature doesn't act next year on this topic (fair scheduling), I will be interested in asking Council to consider an ordinance," Novick said. "I'm committed to a strong process that involves all stakeholders, in developing a policy targeted to address the problem, with consideration of business practices."

The Oregon Working Families Party is leading a coalition of groups who are working together to push state legislators to pass a fair scheduling law. Coalition members include UFCW Local 555, Oregon AFL-CIO, Oregon AFSCME, Oregon Education Association, Service Employees Local 503, Oregon Nurses Association, UNITE-HERE Local 8, Oregon Trial Lawyers Association, the Main Street Alliance of Oregon, and others.

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