



Before the House Commerce and Labor Committee
House Bill 42 –Retail Workers Rights
Sponsor Testimony by Representative Michael J. Skindell
May 21, 2024

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Manchester, Ranking Member McNally, and Members of the House Commerce and Labor Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 42, the Retail and Employee Rights Act. This legislation was previously introduced in prior General Assemblies.

The Retail and Employee Rights Act contains several provisions designed to provide Ohio workers with the same respect that they diligently put into their work, building a stronger and greater Ohio. Designed to protect large chain retail and restaurant workers, the key provisions of House Bill 42 include:

- Promoting full-time employment and access to hours;
- Encouraging fair, predictable schedules;
- Discouraging abusive on-call scheduling practice;
- Encouraging worker retention and job security.

Ohioans are known for their hard work ethic and dedication to their jobs. However, in today's post-recession economy, many large retail employers are employing part-time workers at relatively low wages, forcing employees to attempt to work multiple jobs. At the same time, retail employers are utilizing "just in-time" scheduling practices and changing schedules the "day of" work. These practices make it difficult for the employees to hold a second job, arrange for childcare or pursue more education. Employees can only work for multiple employers if they have predictability in scheduling and are treated fairly.

House Bill 42 outlines provisions employers must follow in order to make schedules predictable for their employees. Employers will be required to post employee schedules publicly at least 14 days in advance. If employers cancel a worker's shift close to it taking place, that employee will be paid some compensation for setting aside their time for work. Furthermore, the legislation includes provisions to have part-time and full-time employees be treated more equally regarding hourly wages, access to time off, and eligibility for promotions.

In addition to predictable scheduling, this bill requires a successor employer to retain certain employees during a transition period after an ownership transfer. Therefore, for example, if one grocery store chain purchases another, it cannot unilaterally and immediately replace all of the original employees.

According to the Economic Policy Institute, by income level, the lowest income workers face the most irregular work schedules, leaving about 17% of the workforce with unstable work shift schedules. It is imperative we work towards increasing economic security and providing strong worker protections at the state level.

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Manchester, Ranking Member McNally, and Members of the House Commerce and Labor Committee, thank you for the opportunity today to provide sponsor testimony on this legislation. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.