Re: Part-Time Worker Bill of Rights Act of 2022

Dear Members of Congress:

As organizations dedicated to strengthening workplace protections and promoting economic security for working families, we write to urge you to co-sponsor the Part-Time Worker Bill of Rights Act in the 117th Congress. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, part-time workers—who are far more likely than full-time workers to be required to report to work in person—have often had to put their health at risk for jobs that leave them with volatile hours, unstable paychecks, and few benefits or opportunities to advance. The Part-Time Worker Bill of Rights Act will help ensure that part-time workers have the pay, hours, and benefits they need to support themselves and their families.

Relative to their full-time counterparts, part-time employees frequently make less per hour, face unpredictable schedules, lack access to important workplace benefits, and are denied promotion opportunities. All working people deserve fair treatment on the job. But employers pay part-time employees less per hour than full-time employees in the same occupations, and part-time workers are far less likely to have access to employer-sponsored benefits such as health insurance, retirement benefits, and paid—or even unpaid—time off. Employers are more likely to give part-time employees short notice of their work schedules and change their hours from week to week. And research shows that employers are more likely to promote full-time workers than part-time workers.

For millions of people across the country, working part time is not a choice. Many people seek part-time work to support their families while caring for loved ones, going to school, or attending to other obligations. But as of December 2021, among the nearly 33 million people working part time in the United States, about one in eight million people working part time in the United States, about one in eight work part time “involuntarily” (as defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics) and would prefer full-time work. And these estimates do not capture people who want to work part time but receive fewer hours than they are seeking from their employer—a scenario that is common in many low-paid service sector jobs. For example, research from the Center for Law and Social Policy shows that up to 40 percent of all people working part time would prefer more hours, including half of people working part time in service occupations. In addition, for some people—especially women—who work part time due to caregiving responsibilities or other obligations, the “choice” of part-time work may be forced by high child care costs or inflexible and unpredictable work schedules. And while rates of involuntary part-time work have come down from their 2020 peaks, the risks posed by new variants of the coronavirus and continued economic uncertainty continue to create instability for part-time workers.

With low pay, volatile work hours and incomes, and little opportunity to advance in the workplace, part-time workers struggle to make ends meet. The challenges of part-time work have severe consequences for working families, as many people working part time—predominantly women—are primary earners for their households. Part-time workers experience poverty at far higher rates than full-time workers, and the economic hardship that Black women and Latinas working part time face is especially pronounced. Addressing this reality, and improving the quality of part-time work, is key to promoting family economic security and to reducing gender and racial income disparities—particularly in the wake of a pandemic that has disproportionately harmed women and people of color.
The Part-Time Worker Bill of Rights Act will extend protections to the part-time workforce that all working people deserve. The Act provides part-time employees with:

- **Part-time parity.** For jobs that require substantially similar skills, responsibilities, and duties, employers would be required to treat part-time and full-time employees equally, including with regard to wages, ability to accrue benefits, and eligibility for promotions.

- **Access to hours.** Some employers spread hours among a large pool of part-time staff in order to “flex up” on short notice, rather than offering stable, full-time positions. By requiring employers to offer additional available hours to their qualified existing employees before making new hires, the law would promote more adequate hours for part-time employees and full-time work for people who want it.

- **Employer pension plans.** The Act would modify the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) to allow part-time employees who have worked at least 500 hours for two consecutive years to access the employer-sponsored retirement plans available to full-time workers.

- **Family and medical leave.** Access to leave—both paid and unpaid—is notably lacking in the U.S., especially for part-time workers. The Act would eliminate the “hours of service” requirement from the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which would allow any employee who has worked for their employer for at least 12 months—regardless of how many hours they work per week—to be eligible for leave under the FMLA.

We urge you to co-sponsor and pass this important legislation.

Sincerely,

9to5
A Better Balance
Action for Children
AFL-CIO
African American Health Alliance
All-Options
American Association of University Women
Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO
BreastfeedLA
Catch Fire Movement
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Center for Popular Democracy
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
Chicago Foundation for Women
Child Care Aware of America
Children’s Defense Fund
Citizen Action of New York
Coalition for Social Justice
Coalition of Labor Union Women, AFL-CIO
Coalition on Human Needs
Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF)
Economic Policy Institute
Equal Rights Advocates
Every Texan
Faith in Public Life
Family Values @ Work
Healthy Nourishment, LLC
Jobs With Justice
Justice for Migrant Women
Kentucky Equal Justice Center
Legal Aid at Work
Legal Momentum, The Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund
MANA, A National Latina Organization
MomsRising
National Black Worker Center
National CAPACD- National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development
National Center for Law and Economic Justice
National Council of Jewish Women
National Employment Law Project
National Employment Lawyers Association
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Law Center
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies
North Carolina Justice Center
Oxfam America
Poligon Education Fund
Public Justice Center
ROC United
Service Employees International Union
Shriver Center on Poverty Law
Start Early
Sugar Law Center for Economic & Social Justice
TakeAction Minnesota
The National Domestic Violence Hotline
United Food and Commercial Workers International Union
United for Respect
We All Rise
Women and Girls Foundation of Southwest PA
Women Employed
Women's Fund of Rhode Island
Women's Law Project
Women's Media Center
Workplace Fairness
YWCA of the University of Illinois