

Committee Secretary

Senate Standing Committees on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

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Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

Australia

Submission to the Inquiry into the Fair Work Amendment (Small Business-Penalty Rates Exemption) Bill 2012

I am a casual employee, working as a stevedore, currently earning around \$43 per hour.

I am 35 years old, no family. I have a mortgage that I cover myself and am studying part time.

If penalty rates were abolished... OURS WERE. However, we were fortunate enough to have the MUA fight for a fair composite hourly rate that took into account our base rate of approx. \$24/hour. We now receive no allowances, penalty rates or overtime, it is all inclusive based on our prior earnings/shift patterns.

To simply remove a workers right to compensatory pay for working outside of "normal" business hours is sheer political bastardry and elitism at it's worst. These are the

battlers in our society, the single mum's, the struggling family's on the poverty line, the students trying to pay for ever increasing (and outrageous) tertiary education fees...and you Mr Xenophon, wish to see them pushed further into debt. Take a look at the crime figures for lower socio-economic suburbs, then have a think about this bill some more.

If you want to help boost small business, how about you offer a tax concession for the businesses this bill is targeting, funded by the ever vocal top 5% who own many of these outfits. Oh yeah, the little people are easier to browbeat, I forgot.

This is our family time, Mr Xenophon. That is the reason the 40 hour working week was introduced, recognising a work/home life balance as essential. If we are to work outside of the "normal" Monday to Friday routine, then we ought to be compensated accordingly...

...politicians are.

My weekends are important to me because...that's when many of my friends and family have their time off. It's when we all have the opportunity to catch up and share a laugh.

We don't work weekends because we want to, we do it because we are paid to. Any business owner who thinks that by cutting penalty rates they are going to create a more loyal workforce and more harmonious working environment are delusional.

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates.

You will only be hurting those of us that are already hurting the most. Next time you

order a meal whilst out with your loved ones on a Saturday night, put yourself in the shoes of the person waiting on you. Ask them why they work the hours they do in what is sure to be an oft thankless job. Ask THEM how a cut in pay will affect them personally. It may be more confronting than you'd like, as books and research papers can't convey emotion.

As a final aside, take a look at the statistics available for shift workers. Dig a little deeper and weigh up the evidence available on full-time vs. casual employment. Take note if you will, the prevalence of above societal averages for depression, mental disorders, suicide, health issues, divorce rates, domestic violence... the list goes on. Workers in the retail/hospitality sector are among the lowest paid and most vulnerable in our society as it is, please don't make life any harder for them. It hurts us all.

Submitted by

Kirk Paterson

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