

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 permanent employee, working as a retail assistant, currently earning around \$20 per hour.

I am a married woman with four children and so far, one grandchild. I work for a company that is open 15 hours a day during the week and 12 hours a day on weekends. We are required to work either one weekend shift or several evening shifts per week. Evenings and weekends are family time. This is when the kids are home from school and want to play sport, dance, participate in art courses, swim, have their friends over. This is when we, as a family, visit grandparents and other relatives and family friends. Weekends and evenings are when the grown kids come over for dinner, with their families, for birthdays and other special occasions.

If penalty rates were abolished, I personally would lose over \$100 in take home pay

per week. That is quite significant for someone in my position. What is more significant is that employers would no longer see weekends and evenings as different to any other time, and we could all be expected to work both days of the weekend plus evenings. Welcome in the age of the machine when we are no longer treated as human beings!

How many family get-togethers must I miss, simply because I want to keep my job. The look on my daughter's face when I told her she couldn't do dancing after school, because I had to work and had no way of getting her there. The same goes for when she wanted to continue playing soccer, after the age of 14, because the older girls play in girls only teams, and the competition is played on a Sunday. Oh yeah, I work Sundays. I remember what it was like when I was a child and wanted to play sport, my parents were unable to get me there, and I had to beg lifts off other team mates parents every week. Sometimes I just had to miss out!

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. Mr Xenophon seems to think he has come up with a good idea to keep the economy booming, but has paid no attention to the people, mostly at the lower end of the income scale, who will be most affected. The little bit extra we earn in penalty rates doesn't stop the hurt, but it does cushion the blow a bit. Especially when both parents work in industries where penalty rates are regularly relied upon to help pay the bills. If Mr Xenophon wishes to save money, perhaps he could petition parliament to do away with politicians lurks and benefits. Maybe he should look to his own income first before he starts on anyone elses!

Submitted by

Elizabeth Algie

Wednesday 17th of October 2012