Committee Secretary

Senate Standing Committees on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

PO Box 6100

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 RN, currently earning around $34 to $35 per hour.

I am 61 years old. I work part time as I am heading towards retirement. My wife does not work. We have a son living with us who has illness whom we both care for.

If penalty rates were abolished my life would be seriously affected. I would have to work full time and even then I would barely equal what I earn now. Currently all my shifts are penalty shifts. I work one weekend in two, for example. This costs in terms of family time and in many other ways. Without penalty rates I estimate my income would be possibly only 2/3 to 3/4 of what it is now. I cannot afford that reduction. RN's are already in desperately short supply in aged care. If this step is taken they will be even scarcer. It simply would not be viable to work what once were penalty shifts.

My weekends are important to me because so often there are activities I would like to attend but cannot when I am working. I belong to a church and many times have had to miss events which I would dearly love to have been at. Many times I also have to sacrifice family events due to work.

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. My work hours and times of work (as for thousands of others) are tailored to the the income for those hours and times. Take away penalty rates and my entire life is severely disrupted and changed forever. Aged care is already poorly enough paid as it is, and the whole industry is under staffed. This will worsen things enormously. Our society has enough economic injustices and inequities as it is. Let's not create another.

Submitted by
Robert McDermott
Wednesday 26th of September 2012