

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 Registered Nurse, currently earning around 30.00 per hour.

I work in aged care which is a 24/7 industry for nursing staff but not management or administration staff. My husband works in a public hospital and is on a 24/7 roster. He has worked in this profession for many years. We have raised a family where he has worked most weekends and many night shifts which has led to considerable sacrifices and compromises to his involvement in family life and our social life. Currently I work evening shifts.

If penalty rates were abolished... My husband estimates his income will decrease by 20% given he is on a rotating roster, working many weekends and regular night shift. I work set days and would lose 12% evening shift loading. I would certainly not work

weekends in the future if penalty rates were abolished and would most likely leave the aged care industry. My husband would be forced to leave nursing in NSW due to the substantial loss of income. I have a son who works part time in a supermarket. He currently earns \$13.00 an hour. On this base rate he is reliant on Sunday penalty rates to make his position financially viable.

My weekends are important to me because...My husband has missed out on involvement with sporting events with our children over the years. I have essentially attended many weekend sports fixtures on my own as well as presentation days and other functions. He has been unable to commit as a coach to soccer teams because he works Saturdays. We have constantly had to juggle and compromise and miss out on social functions because of my husband's work at weekends. As he works evening shifts, he is locked into these shifts once his roster is finalised. It makes accepting a last minute invitation on a Saturday night impossible. The only thing that makes this lifestyle viable is a financial incentive.

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. There is little point working weekends without some financial reward. My husband will lose out significantly financially if penalty rates are abolished. I do not believe we are living in a 24/7 economy. Most workers are not available 24/7. Workers such as electricians charge extra for a house call at unsocial hours as do GP's who are "on call" at weekends. Given that many people do not in fact work weekends or public holidays makes the proposition that we live in a 24/7 economy ridiculous. Consider this whole proposition when everyone is working shifts 24/7 in every industry. I do not think this will happen but weekend workers will have been targeted and will be the ones left worse off financially while everyone else continues to enjoy the weekends.

Submitted by

Susan Payne

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