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 Radiographer, currently earning around $36 per hour.

I have a mortgage, a growing and grown family all whom still need substantial financial support. Two of of my children have special needs. My wife does not work due to the care needs of these children. I don't work in the hospitality industry but believe it is unfair to create a separate class of disadvantaged worker just to suit particular industrial vested interests.

If penalty rates were abolished... I would lose 25% of my income. It would significantly affect part time colleagues who have families who help solve staffing problems by filling very difficult to fill weekend, evening and night shifts.

My weekends are important to me because...this is the bulk of my family and social time. If penalties were not paid there would be less incentive for me to cover roster hours on the weekend. I would consider moving away from shift work entirely so would my colleagues and this trend generally would cause a shortage of qualified staff willing to work odd hours.
I constantly miss children's concerts, family functions and social functions. I am an amateur astronomer and my shift obligations result in me missing many clear nights to observe the stars and weekend astronomy events are very hard to get to if not impossible.

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. I think you are cutting off the nose to spite the face especially as many shift workers rely on penalties to supplement low wages.
If you cancelled shift rates Unions would have no option to push aggressively for higher minimum and award rates to compensate. It may cost more in the long run.

Submitted by
Michael Booth
Tuesday 18th of September 2012