

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Jan Teague, President/CEO  
Washington Retail Association  
360-943-9198, Ext. 19  
[jteague@retailassociation.org](mailto:jteague@retailassociation.org)

### **Retailers voice opposition to the Seattle scheduling ordinance**

*It would reduce the flexibility and work hours employees need*

The Washington Retail Association today urged the Seattle City Council to drop efforts for its mandated scheduling ordinance that would hurt the very employees it seeks to help.

“We understand that the City Council’s is trying to address the challenges faced by some workers in Seattle. Unfortunately, this ordinance does not target just the companies with abusive practices,” stated Jan Teague, President/CEO of the Washington Retail Association.

As proposed, the ordinance would wipe out the scheduling flexibility that benefits employees and employers. It would also require employers to pay a “predictability pay” penalty if they offer work hours directly to employees. Employers can only avoid the penalty pay by offering the extra hours to all qualified employees through cumbersome mass communications, like email or text.

In many cases, retail store managers will not have the authority to add to their payroll costs by paying predictability pay. As a result, stores will just operate with a smaller number of employees on a shift when an employee could not come to work. By reducing the number of hours available to work, this ordinance will reduce the incomes of many retail employees.

Reliable national research has found that a majority of retail employees use scheduling flexibility to balance their work and life obligations. Even

Seattle's own research showed that more than 80 percent of retail employees are now able to swap shifts and specify and limit their availability for work.

"Any way you slice it, this ordinance will make the workplace less flexible to meet the needs of employees and employers," said Jan Teague. "Sadly, this ordinance will reduce the number of hours available for many retail and restaurant employees – and they cannot afford to see their incomes go down."

In San Francisco, where a scheduling law is in force, employers say they are having problems providing flexible work hours to meet their employee scheduling needs, are hiring less and reducing staff. This shifts the burden of work on remaining employees and cheats customers with reduced services. Twelve other states and cities have considered restrictive scheduling and either withdrawn ordinances or put them on the shelf. These include California, New York State, Maryland, Rhode Island and Washington, D.C.

Seattle's proposal would weigh store managers down with piles of paperwork to document every change in the work schedule for each employee.

"Every scheduling conversation would need to be documented and the paperwork saved for three years," Teague said. "We believe that even an agreeable employee-to-employee shift swap would need to be documented with the signatures of both employees, as well as the manager, in order for the employer to feel protected with evidence to back up that the swap was not employer initiated. Today, such a shift swap often requires no approval from the manager. This ordinance will burden employees and employers alike."

Seattle's scheduling ordinance will reduce the work hours and flexibility that retail employees need to balance work with their other life priorities. Whether they are going to school, working a second job or caring for a child or ailing parent, this ordinance will complicate that balance for many retail employees.

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