Original Manuscript

Official Journal of United Association for Labor Education

Labor Studies Journal
1–28

DOI: 10.1177/0160449X211033664
journals.sagepub.com/home/lsj

Time Theft in the Los Angeles Retail Sector: The Need for New Labor Standards and a Fair Workweek

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Abstract

We argue that employers subject workers to *time theft* by controlling workers' time—both on and off the clock. Time theft considers employer control of workers' time without the promise of pay *through unstable scheduling practices* as well as *beyond their scheduled work hours*. We develop a typology of time theft through a discussion of survey and workshop data with retail workers in Los Angeles. We underscore how federal labor law is inadequate to address unstable scheduling and we discuss retail worker organizing and the implications of time theft for labor policy and worker movements.

Keywords

time theft, unstable scheduling, work hours, labor law, workers' rights

Introduction

Scheduling is a key labor concern within the contemporary low-wage retail industry because of the negative repercussions it can have on workers' lives (Carré and Tilly 2017; Henly and Lambert 2010, 2014; Ikeler 2018). Scheduling practices not only

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make retail workers' jobs precarious (Carré and Tilly 2012; Henly, Shaefer, and Waxman 2006; Ikeler 2018; Wood 2018), but also adversely impact workers' lives outside of the workplace, including their other life and care responsibilities (Carrillo et al. 2017; Henly and Lambert 2014; Henly, Shafer, and Waxman 2006; Schneider and Harknett 2019a, 2019b). Building on prior scholarship, including the concepts of scheduling variability, and employer control (Henly and Lambert 2014; Ikeler 2018), this article focuses on retail workers' lack of control of their time and how unstable scheduling practices and last-minute changes produce what we call *time theft*. We make this theoretical intervention by developing a typology of time theft. We illustrate the typology of time theft through a discussion of the results from over 800 surveys and several workshops with frontline retail workers in Los Angeles, as well as analysis of labor policy discourse on unstable scheduling and an examination of retail worker organizing around issues of time.

Workers' lack of control of their time is not new but has taken on a distinctive form in recent decades. Since the mid-1990s, with the advent of just-in-time scheduling technology, retail employers set workers' hours to respond to incremental shifts in customer traffic, under the premise of workplace efficiency (Boushey and Ansel 2016; Brody 2018; Cauthen 2011). Such scheduling practices require workers to be constantly available. They are thus expected to give the potential of all their time to their employers, while workers receive neither properly scheduled time nor sufficient work hours. In this article, we examine time theft as it occurs through the structural elements of unstable scheduling practices, which include open availability, last-minute scheduling, and unreliable and insufficient hours. We define "time theft" as scheduling practices through which retail employers demand control of and ultimately take over workers' time, even when they are not on the job. Because of the ubiquity of unstable scheduling practices in the retail industry, coupled with the lack of worker protections for underwork and unstable scheduling, we argue that retail workers' time and their ability to organize their lives are stolen from them.

We locate our concept of time theft within workers' rights scholarship on wage theft and its impacts on low-wage workers (Bernhardt et al. 2009; Bobo 2009; Fine 2006; Milkman, González, and Narro 2010; Milkman, Gonzalez, and Ikeler 2012). Wage theft prevention is rooted in existing labor law and workplace legal standards that protect workers' wages, how workers are paid, and what breaks they are entitled to. However, time theft prevention falls outside the legal parameters of wage theft prevention established in New Deal era labor laws. In other words, labor law standards that were enacted in the 1930s to protect certain workers' from working more than a 40 h week and 8 h workday without overtime pay are no longer sufficient in the neoliberal, low-wage service sector (Alexander and Haley-Lock 2015). New demands for fair schedules throughout the country, in particular Fair Workweek Los Angeles (FWLA), come from coalitional worker organizing for new labor standards that can address this gap in the retail industry. These standards, however, have yet to be universally implemented across industries or at the federal level.

Analogous to wage theft, time theft has material implications for the predictability of retail workers' pay, given workers' variable weekly work hours. Beyond its effect on wages, time theft affects workers' ability to organize their broader social lives—whether as care providers for family and other social relations, as students, and much more. In this article, we describe time theft as twofold. The first facet considers employer control of workers' time without the promise of pay through *unstable scheduling practices*; the second facet considers employer control of workers' time *beyond their scheduled work hours* through expectations of complete availability and flexibility. As such, the concept of time theft allows us to scrutinize the lack of protections for the stability of workers' time, and thus their income, and provides insights into efforts to protect workers' time and social well-being through burgeoning workers' movements.

We first situate the specific dynamics of the retail industry in Los Angeles as a site of low-wage work. Next, we contextualize the historical and structural dimensions that allow for time theft, including how the Fair Labor Standards Act is increasingly inadequate to address scheduling practices because of neoliberal deregulation and the increasing use of scheduling technology. We then discuss our methods and research justice approach (Assil, Kim, and Waheed 2015), including the partnership between the UCLA Labor Center, the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE), and a labor-community coalition that collected and analyzed survey and qualitative data to inform the development of a Fair Workweek policy.[1] In our findings, we analyze original survey and qualitative data to elucidate two facets of time theft. We conclude with a discussion of the implications of time theft beyond the retail industry and for labor law and worker movements, including current efforts by FWLA.

The Los Angeles Retail Industry

The retail sector is an integral part of the Los Angeles landscape. There are almost half a million retail workers in Los Angeles county, with 147,157 workers in the city (U.S Census Bureau, Economic Census 2017). Retail made up a tenth of the private sector workforce in the county and was its second largest employer (U.S. Census Bureau 2015).[2] Despite concerns about the decline of retail due to online shopping, the industry remained robust and was, in fact, expanding in the region (Carré and Tilly 2017; Halzack 2017; Thompson 2017). Like other service sector jobs, such as restaurant work, retail has brought employment to the region as other major industries, such as manufacturing, have declined as a result of neoliberal restructuring (Milkman 2006; Storper et al. 2015). Los Angeles has one of the country's largest shopping malls, and its seven malls were anchored with a range of department, big-box, and discount retailers (Joseph et al. 2019).

Despite the industry's growth, the majority of retail workers in Los Angeles earn low wages. Nationally, retail wages have declined by 28 percent since the 1970s (Carré and Tilly 2017), and retail as an industry has become a part of the low-wage service sector. More than half of the retail workforce in Los Angeles earn low wages, defined as two-thirds of the median area wage (U.S. Census Bureau 2016).[3]

Frontline floor workers make up almost half of retail industry positions (U.S. Census Bureau 2016). They greet customers, answer questions on the floor, stock shelves, work the cash registers, clean the stores, open and close, do inventory, and much more. At the time of the study, 53 percent of frontline retail workers in Los Angeles only worked part-time (U.S. Census Bureau 2016). One in three were heads of household, and one in three supported children (U.S. Census Bureau 2016). Additionally, contrary to the narratives claiming that retail jobs are filled by high school students and young people, we found that seven in ten frontline workers in Los Angeles were 25 years of age or older, 83 percent had at least a high school education, and only 22 percent were currently students at some level. Further, the majority (77 percent) worked year-round.

The impacts of unstable scheduling practices on frontline retail workers are racialized and gendered. The majority of frontline retail workers (78 percent) were people of color, including 57 percent who were Latinx. Over half (52 percent) of retail frontline workers were women (U.S. Census Bureau 2016). And, 63 percent were born in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau 2016). As the vast majority of retail workers in Los Angeles were women and workers of color, primarily Latinas (U.S. Census Bureau 2016), the impacts of unstable scheduling practices are racialized and gendered, and disproportionately affect Latina workers. At the same time, our analyses of our original survey data reveal that unstable scheduling adversely affects frontline retail workers across demographics.

Since 2014, state policies in California have begun to transform low-wage jobs by raising the minimum wage, requiring paid time off, and increasing worker protections, including protections against wage theft. Over the past 5 years, the state has enacted more than thirty measures to support labor and workplace issues.[4] Los Angeles is also a leader in progressive labor regulation and service sector organizing, especially with the worker center movement (Fine 2006; Milkman, González, and Narro 2010). Despite recently enhanced workers' rights protections, the scheduling practices endemic in the retail industry mean that employers have been able to circumvent such labor reforms, as they maintain a large pool of workers with open availability and thereby avoid hiring full-time workers, paying benefits, and overtime and thereby keep their labor costs as low as possible (Lambert and Henly 2009; Mitchell 2017; Schneider and Harknett 2019a, 2019b). Ultimately, we argue that time theft is a core mechanism that employers use to maintain control over workers and bypass many of the intended outcomes of recent labor standards reforms.

Literature Review

Labor Law: Overwork and Underwork

Scholarship on work time, workers' rights, and labor policy often point to the manufacturing industry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a key example of unregulated overwork. The expected work hours across industries in this era was well over 40 h per week. Seeking to foster fair labor conditions, the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) limited the standard workweek to 40 h in order to eliminate "labor conditions detrimental to the maintenance of the minimum standard of living necessary for health, efficiency, and the general well-being of workers" (Fair Labor Standards Act 1938). Beyond limiting excessive hours, the FLSA also established minimum wage and overtime pay standards. However, the FLSA also excluded certain racialized and gendered industries, namely farm and domestic work, which had predominantly Black workforces at the time (Boris 2017; Katznelson 2005; Nadasen 2012; Palmer 1995; Perea 2011). Additionally, retail workers were not covered by the FLSA until persistent organizing efforts against the business-led American Retail Federation changed the regulations to include retail in 1961 (Costa 2000). Lastly, restaurant workers were also left out of some aspects of these federal protections through a provision for a lower minimum wage for workers receiving a tipped wage (Jayaraman 2016).

While the FLSA established the 9-to-5 workday as a standard for white-collar workers in the mid-twentieth century, the reorganization of work under neoliberal economics and global capitalism in the 1970s shifted the structure of work hours and work time in the service sector (Berg, Bosch and Charest 2014; Koeber 2017; Presser 2003; Sassen 2000). Standard work hours, particularly in the retail sector, devolved into non-standard, part-time, and eventually fluctuating schedules, where part-time workers receive few or no benefits (Ben-Ishai et al. 2016; Berg et al. 2004; Even and Macpherson 2019; Lichtenstein 2009). The increase in part-time work in retail, a trend since the 1980s, has been accompanied by industry expansion and increased profits (Carré and Tilly 2012; Alexander and Haley-Lock 2015; Lichtenstein 2009; Plunket and Hayghe 1995).[5] As such, the FLSA's protections against overwork do not address the contemporary concerns of underwork and lack of stable and sufficient hours in the retail industry (Alexander and Haley-Lock 2015).

Recent scholarship on wage theft also emerged from discussions on labor policy and organizing to address concerns about the enforcement of existing FLSA-based worker's rights standards (Bernhardt et al. 2009; Bernhardt, Spiller, and Theodore 2013; Milkman, González, and Narro 2010; Milkman, Gonzalez, and Ikeler 2012). This literature describes a "workplace enforcement crisis, with widespread violations of many long-established legal standards" (Milkman, Gonzalez, and Ikeler 2012). We argue that, in addition to wage theft, low-wage workers are subject to time theft, as they are provided neither sufficient hours nor control over their time inside or outside the workplace. Time theft highlights both the scheduling practices within the retail industry that produce unstable scheduling and the lack of federal legal standards to prevent it. With the exception of certain child labor and overtime provisions, there are no FLSA provisions or federal rules that cover scheduling practices (Alexander and Haley-Lock 2015; Berg, Bosch, and Charest 2014). In most jurisdictions in the United States, an employer may change employee work hours without prior notice or consent, if they are not subject to a collective bargaining agreement with a labor union that prohibits such schedule changes. Employers can also use these practices to narrowly avoid paying for what would otherwise be legally mandated benefits for full-time workers.

In business scholarship, the notion of time theft is described quite differently. The concept of "time banditry" describes employees wasting employers' time. Such scholarship points to employees' daydreaming on the clock as stealing employers' time

(Henle, Reeve, and Pitts 2010; Martin et al. 2010), while ignoring the concerns of task routinization, underwork, understaffing, and last-minute scheduling. We subvert the business concept to focus on employer-driven practices of unstable scheduling and lack of respect for workers' time on and off the clock.

Technologies for Work Time, But No Time for Anything Else

The literature on time and work in the shift to the neoliberal service economy is salient in theorizing time theft in contemporary retail. First, scholarship highlights the ways that time and temporality in the workplace produce worker discipline and control as well as worker resistance. For example, the concept of clock time at the workplace elucidates how technology in industrial capitalism shaped worker discipline in ways that are useful for understanding control in service economies (Thompson 1967). Second, feminist theories of work make contributions to notions of work time through the intensification of service work and the commodification of intimacy in paid forms of work, the difficulty in assessing the boundedness of work/life, and the ongoing responsibilities of social reproduction and care work (Weeks 2007). Such scholarship also points to the conundrum of assessing work time when the boundaries of home and life blur, for example, with home healthcare workers and caregivers who have difficulty calculating what constitutes work time and being on the clock if a care provider is giving a bath versus supervising the intake of a single night time pill (Boris 2017; Boris and Klein 2010). In that vein, scholars also point to the turn to 24 h big-box and discount retail stores as a part of the post-Fordist service economy, where extended employer hours are at odds with, and shift, the biorhythms of life and impact a web of time (Gerstel and Clawson 2018, Heyes 1997; Hope 2016). In other words, the intensification and normalization of nonnormative work hours extends beyond a workplace and interrupts circadian rhythms that otherwise would allow for healthy sleep patterns or social and family relations (Hope 2016).

Specifically, as the retail industry expanded forms of control to cover all the hours and shifts of a 24 h shop, it also relied on greater task routinization and surveillance mechanisms rooted in new workplace technology and service efficiency models (Hope 2016; Ikeler 2016a, 2016b; Van Oort 2019; Wood 2018). Big-box, discount stores like Walmart, Kmart, and Target sought to keep labor costs low with the use of new stocking technology. The introduction of Universal Product Code (UPC) scanning technology in discount stores contributed to the perceived deskilling of retail work (Lichtenstein 2009; Windham 2017).[6] And, other examples of current workplace surveillance that produce and discipline worker emotion and time include monitoring with cameras, digital and computerized oversight, and mandatory tracking applications on workers' phones and at their work stations (Ikeler 2018; Van Oort 2019). Such strategies to increase productivity and decrease labor costs require just-in-time, flexible scheduling practices. These practices of contingent control over workers lead to precarious and unstable scheduling, which expand employers' reach in workers' lives beyond the worksite (Ikeler 2018).

With the expanded use of management technologies, scheduling has now become a primary tool of employer control of the workforce (Pandey 2017). Previously, retail scheduling relied on sales forecasting, which is the practice of assigning workplace staffing based on the amount of predicted sales for a given period. However, technology developed in the late 1990s began to focus on customer traffic patterns instead (Lam, Vandenbosch, and Pearce 1998). Workforce optimization systems schedule workers' hours based on customer traffic rather than worker needs, as a way to minimize labor costs (Alexander and Tippett 2017; Center for Law and Social Policy, Retail Action Project and Women Employed 2014; Gleason and Lambert 2014). This technology also assesses times of day, weather, seasonal variation, and sporting events that may affect customer traffic (Boushey and Ansel 2016; Center for Law and Social Policy et al. 2014). In 2007, Walmart was an early adopter of technology based on customer traffic, and such scheduling software has since become pervasive throughout the industry (Boushey and Ansel 2016). Scholars point to key examples of such "just-in-time scheduling" or "scheduling to demand" software, like Kronos, Dayforce, Onshift, Reflexis, and Workbrain, which assess customer traffic so that frontline managers can tailor schedules and ration employees' hours to meet payroll targets (Alexander and Tippett 2017; Cauthen 2011; Center for Law and Social Policy et al. 2014; Gleason and Lambert 2014).

In addition to allowing companies to reduce staffing costs, some scheduling software is designed to schedule workers' hours to deliberately prevent workers from qualifying for overtime pay mandated by the FLSA or health insurance coverage mandated for some full-time employees under the 2010 Affordable Care Act (Alexander and Tippett 2017; Gleason and Lambert 2014). While this technology claims to increase flexibility, that flexibility is one-sided and unresponsive to the needs of retail workers (Cauthen 2011; Luce and Fujita 2012). The software companies' efficiency claims are also inaccurate, as multiple studies have shown that these practices result in high rates of turnover (Boushey and Ansel 2016; Cauthen 2011; Gleason and Lambert 2014).[7] Even though retail companies have begun to adapt to this turnover, it still impacts employee morale, leads to inadequate staffing, and adds to instability in the overall workforce (Cauthen 2011; Lambert and Henly 2010).

Lastly, lack of worker representation is another key aspect of contingent control (Ikeler 2018). As the retail industry has grown and transformed in the United States, so too has retail worker organizing focused implicitly on workers' time. The retail sector is largely nonunion, though it has a long history of union, worker association, and worker center organizing (Ikeler 2014, 2016b). A series of prominent labor strikes in the 1930s reorganized the industry to meet workers' demands for better wages and hours (Plunkett-Powell 1999; Zinn, Frank, and Kelley 2002).[8] A key demand of retail workers in department store organizing was for what could be considered predictable scheduling with limited hours to address issues of overwork (Zinn, Frank, and Kelley 2002). As the industry has shifted from department stores to round-the-clock big-box and discount stores, it has also aggressively pursued antiunion tactics (Ikeler 2016b; Windham 2017). These resulted in employers' expanded ability to impose unstable scheduling practices without organized resistance. However, the more recent organizing efforts around Fair Workweek Initiatives (FWIs) seek to combat these practices through legislation that requires predictable and consistent scheduling practices.

These employer practices create a workplace culture that normalizes unstable retail worker schedules, last-minute scheduling changes, hours that change week by week, workers on constant standby, a lack of collaboration between management and employees, and inadequate hours. As a result, workers are often compelled to organize their time and lives around their employer's scheduling needs instead of their personal obligations or aspirations. These practices not only shift workers' perception of their time but also normalizes how their time—both on and off the clock—is stolen from them.

Methods

This article makes a theoretical intervention by developing the concept and typology of time theft, as it emerged from a research justice study of unstable scheduling practices in the Los Angeles retail industry. We use survey and workshop data to illustrate the time theft typology. These data were collected using a research justice approach that engaged retail workers, students, and community organizations to collect and analyze survey data.[9] Retail workers, students, and community partners collected over 800 surveys in the city of Los Angeles during a 6-month period from December 2016 to June 2017. The UCLA Labor Center research team then developed infographics based on an initial analysis of survey data, which were presented as gallery posters at five participatory workshops across the city for community organizers, union and nonunion retail workers, students, and other stakeholders, seeking their feedback. Over 100 participants attended to provide in-depth analysis of the infographics and data points, which was also core to the process of assessing major worker issues. The research team then conducted subsequent analyses based on participants' feedback. These were summarized in a UCLA Labor Center report (Shadduck-Hernández et al. 2018) that informed the development of a Fair Workweek Policy campaign in Los Angeles. From this process, it became clear that workers were experiencing employer control over their time that had material implications akin to, but distinct from wage theft. We then revisited our report findings considering the insights gained through coalition dialogue and policy development to understand the shape and implications of time theft as a concept relevant to labor policy discourse, including efforts to combat wage theft and unstable scheduling.

The surveys we discuss below are of frontline retail workers in Los Angeles, including salespeople, cashiers, stockers, and food workers in grocery, retail pharmacy, and nonfood retail stores. The sample is stratified to include respondents from different areas of the city and representative demographics. The majority of stores surveyed were nonfood retail stores such as clothing, shoes, and electronics stores. The surveys slightly oversampled grocery and drugstores to compare scheduling practices by type of retail store, though we found little difference in scheduling by type of store.

Table 1. Census and Sample Demographics of Frontline Retail Workers.

		Los Angeles County Census	Our sample unweighted	Our sample weighted
Sex	Female	53%	63%	53%
	Male	47%	37%	47%
Race/ ethnicity	Latino	56%	71%	56%
	Black	7%	6%	7%
	Asian	12%	3%	12%
	White	23%	12%	23%
	Other	2%	8%	2%
Student status	Student	23%	31%	23%
	Non-student	77%	69%	77%
Educational attainment	High school or less	47%	54%	53%
	Some college	33%	23%	22%
	Associate's degree	6%	15%	11%
	Bachelor's degree	11%	7%	9%
	Advanced degree	2%	2%	2%
Sector	Non-food retail	70%	57%	58%
	Grocery	27%	32%	31%
	Pharmacy	3%	10%	11%

Note: Weighting categories included sex, race/ethnicity, and student status based on the ACS 2011-2015 5-Year Estimates. Significance tests revealed insignificant differences by education and sector.

We weighted the data so that it better represented the population demographics of Los Angeles retail workers (U.S. Census Bureau 2016). Qualitative data were collected from open-ended survey questions and from participatory workshops and were analyzed by emergent themes. Last, to contextualize contemporary time theft, we also use discourse analysis of labor policy around organizing for Fair Workweek policies (Table 1).

Time Theft and Its Impacts

Hourly workers in frontline retail occupations have schedules and hours that fluctuate such that employers control workers' time both on and off the clock. With little or no notice of upcoming schedules and with last-minute schedule changes, workers are essentially robbed of their time off work as well as of time they were expecting to be paid for. As one retail worker put it, "We know that unfair and irregular scheduling practices are an unacknowledged form of wage theft, which we typically think of as failure to pay the minimum wage or overtime wages, for example. Lost hours are lost wages, which exacerbates economic insecurity."

In the findings below, we conceptualize two modes of time theft that impact frontline retail workers' ability to plan their lives. While there are a range of unstable scheduling practices, we focus on: (1) time theft through unstable but scheduled work time, including short notice of schedules, last-minute schedule changes, and not enough time

Table 2. Time Theft Typology and Practices.

Time Theft through unstable but scheduled work hours	Time Theft through control of workers' time off the job
Short notice of work schedules of a week or less	Expectations of open availability to be scheduled to work any day, any shift, any number of hours, which results in highly variable schedules
Last minute employer-initiated changes to work schedules, including canceled shifts	On-demand scheduling, including calling workers on the days they were scheduled to not be working
Inadequate rest time through scheduled split shifts or clopening with <10 hrs rest between closing and the following opening shift	On-call scheduling practices, where workers are expected to wait to be called in or to call the day of to see if they would be scheduled

between shifts; and (2) time theft through expectations of open availability, on-demand scheduling, and on-call practices. Both types of time theft result in underwork, unpredictable income, and workers' inability to plan or prioritize their lives outside of work (Table 2).

Time Theft Through Unstable Scheduling

The first area of time theft demonstrates how employers control workers' scheduled time through unstable scheduling. Advance notice of work schedules is key to schedule predictability (Henly and Lambert 2014; Henly, Schaefer, and Waxman 2006; Lambert, Haley-Lock, and Henly 2012). Failure to provide adequate advance notice results in time theft. Like other retail workers across the United States (Ben-Ishai et al. 2016; Dickson, Golden, and Bruno 2019; Henly and Lambert 2014; Lambert, Haley-Lock, and Henly 2012; Luce and Fujita 2012), Los Angeles retail workers get very little notice of their schedules. Of the workers surveyed, 77 percent were notified of their shifts a week or less in advance. One-quarter received their schedules with as little as 1 to 3 days' notice. The lack of adequate advance notice results in workers' inability to plan other life and leisure activities, effectively giving employers complete control of workers' time (Gleason and Lambert 2014; Lambert et al. 2019).

Workers in the participatory workshops also emphasized that lack of adequate notice made it nearly impossible to plan their lives, including responsibilities such as caregiving and schoolwork. A retail worker who participated in the workshop explained, "I would like managers to be more understanding of family needs and support us. Our schedules should be posted two weeks in advance at a minimum, with enough hours and one shift so we can plan out our family life and daily responsibilities better." Another retail worker in the workshop shared, "I have a day and half notice to know my schedule. It's not convenient for me but when we have to request days off, we have to give 2 weeks' notice in advance, but that doesn't mean you'll get it." In this instance, the lack of advanced notice disrupts worker's ability to plan, described as convenience; that dichotomy of power based on who gets to plan and who does not demonstrates how worker's time is effectively stolen from them.

Even after schedules have been assigned, workers still have their time taken from them, which forces them to reorganize their time to keep up with such changes. Managers continue to alter posted schedules, including start times, shift cancellations, and total hours through employer-initiated schedule changes. Sixty-four percent of retail workers surveyed reported that their managers changed their schedules after they were posted. These changes usually occurred with little notice, with half of workers reporting less than one day's notice of schedule changes once they had been posted. Strikingly, one-third of workers received schedule changes within 2 h of their shifts. A grocery worker emphasized how workers need to constantly monitor their unstable schedules because of the frequency of changes and the lack of direct updates about them:

> My schedule is always changing. I have to work my life around it. Sometimes I just don't answer the phone, but they'll change my schedule the week of anyway. They just change it without calling. If you don't see it, you're screwed.

While answering or not answering the phone was a worker strategy deployed to subvert last-minute scheduling changes, the grocery worker still had to make time to both remain on top of their schedule and also adapt their own potential activities for employer-driven shift adjustments made on a short notice. Similarly, a retail worker who participated in a workshop underscored their desire for a stable schedule without changes after their schedule was posted:

> My schedule changes every week, and I never work the same days. I know not having a set schedule is common practice, but that doesn't make it right! Everyone should have the right to a set schedule with no last-minute scheduling changes.

In this quote, the frequency of schedule changes impacts knowing which days the retail worker will have off on a weekly basis, limiting any sense of weekly planning. In both examples, store managers generally hold the power to set retail workers' schedules and frequently implement such last-minute changes based on anticipated store needs (Swanberg, Watson, and Eastman 2014). In particular, scheduling software used by many large retail stores has also increased last-minute schedule changes (Brody 2018; Boushey and Ansel 2016; Cauthen 2011). The more last-minute the change, the more challenging it is for workers to plan their lives around scheduled work time.

Of changes to already scheduled time, shift cancellations represent an extreme form of time theft, where last-minute scheduling changes result in underwork or no work. Of retail workers surveyed, 16 percent had their shifts cancelled with less than a day's notice. Through this practice, retail employers steal workers' time in an egregious way that impacts anticipated income. In addition to losing income for an anticipated and previously scheduled shift, workers also lose out on the ability to assertively plan other life activities or to take up a shift at another job to supplement their anticipated, but lost income. A sales clerk at a national children's clothing retailer declared, "I feel like I have an unfair schedule. I never get enough hours, and my hours are often cut!" Articulated as unfair, the retail clothing retail worker has come to expect underwork instead of a stable schedule. Time theft occurs as workers are not only unable to plan other activities, but also workers do not receive income that they may have been counting on.

Two other scheduling practices, "clopening" and split shifts, also encroach on and steal workers' nonwork time, particularly time for rest. The practice of "clopening" requires workers to close a store late at night and then return early the next morning to open the store. Sixty-one percent of retail workers who worked clopening shifts had fewer than 10 h between their shifts, not enough time to travel from and to work again, eat meals, and get sufficient sleep or rest. A sales associate at a retail fashion chain shared her frustration with this practice: "I wish I could get more regular hours and that the store would get rid of clopening so I don't have to open and close the store." One worker shared, "I have lived experience of this. I close and open. It drains me. These are horrible. I can't sleep or rest." The lack of adequate sleep can jeopardize workers' health (Ruark 2015). And, in attempting to manage the cycle of drained energy that clopening creates, a drugstore worker explained: "I guzzle Red Bull, so it takes the melatonin time to kick in. So then is it even worth it to sleep?" Workers note the cycle of unrest that practice of clopening creates, a type of time theft that is normalized and acceptable under current labor practices. While the FLSA protects the 8 h workday, wage and hour law does not explicitly protect workers from practices like clopening.[10]

Split shifts are another employer practice that is a form of time theft and is not covered by existing federal protections. For split shifts, workers are assigned to work two periods in one day with a short, unpaid period in between. Twenty percent of retail workers we surveyed worked split shifts. Though also technically legal because neither shift constitutes overtime, the split shift represents a type of time theft where workers are essentially held hostage to the workplace between shifts. Retail workers in our workshops reported that the time between shifts was usually not long enough to go home to rest, take care of dependents, attend a class, or work at another job. Similar to clopening, split shifts negatively impact workers' physical and mental health, as there is less time for rest and adjustment between work and other responsibilities like family, caretaking, or school (Cho 2018), and split shifts are specifically linked to increased work–family conflict (Golden 2015).

Time Theft Through Open Availability

The retail industry has normalized expectations that workers will be available and flexible to accommodate just-in-time efficiency by having open availability. This practice allows employers to schedule the minimal number of workers at any given time on short notice. Scholars have shown that retail managers, in order to ensure maximum availability, inquire about workers' ability to work full-time even when managers have no intention of offering full-time employment (Luce, Hammad, and Sipe

2014). Sixty-two percent of surveyed retail workers reported that they were expected to keep their schedules wide open for any shifts their supervisor assigned. And there are frequently consequences for refusing last-minute shift assignments. Retail workers in the participatory research workshops shared that it was common for workers to feel compelled to take whatever hours they were assigned, rather than negotiate their preferred days or times:

> In my workplace, my schedule is constantly changing, and it affects my planning. I have been in pain due to my knee, and the manager would not let me go early to seek medical care, so I just keep working and take whatever hours I am given.

Studies have confirmed that employers may retaliate against workers who refuse assigned shifts or attempt to negotiate shifts by reducing worker hours, assigning undesirable shifts and days off, reprimanding workers, and more (Ben-Ishai et al. 2016; Scott, King, and Reddy 2017). Through the expectation of open availability, employers pressure workers to prioritize work time over all other activities, resulting in the theft of their personal time.

Specifically, open availability often results in extreme schedule variability. Of retail workers surveyed, 84 percent did not have a set weekly schedule each week, and most experienced extreme fluctuations in their weekly schedules. Almost three-quarters reported that the days they work changed weekly; more than two-thirds reported that their shifts, such as morning or evening shifts, changed from week to week; and 69 percent of workers noted that their start and end times changed week by week. One nonfood retail worker reported, “In my workplace, my schedule is never the same from week to week. Who can have a life when you never know when you are going to work or when they are going to call you in?” Another grocery worker employed as a stocker simply stated, “I am tired of my inconsistent schedule. I would like to work the same hours all the time.” The employer practice of shifting workers’ schedules from week to week is premised on the expectation of open availability. This practice makes it difficult for workers to maintain stability in their lives, including providing childcare, meeting educational responsibilities, and securing additional employment (Ben-Ishai et al. 2016; Schneider and Harknett 2019a, 2019b; Zeytinoglu et al. 2004, 2005).

Workers’ personal time is also controlled and stolen from them by on-demand scheduling practices that require workers to be available if called in on their days off, to be on-call for unscheduled shifts, and/or to call in to find out if they’re scheduled to work that day. Of retail workers surveyed, 60 percent had been called in to work on their days off. Because of the prevalence of insufficient hours, low wages, and retaliation for refusing shifts, workers may feel compelled to take these additional hours. Consequently, employers control workers’ time off the clock without having to guarantee consistent pay.

The requirement to be on-call also holds workers’ nonwork, or personal, time in limbo. Workers on-call are expected to be available to report to work immediately or the next day if they are called in, thus prioritizing an unstable work schedule over any other life commitments. The practice of requiring workers to be on-call without pay may be decreasing (Alexander and Haley-Lock 2015), as a series of recent lawsuits have challenged this practice (Crotty 2017; Kachroo-Levine 2017; Turner 2016).[11] However, 20 percent of retail workers surveyed reported that they were still expected to be on-call. In addition, 16 percent were expected to call in to learn whether they were working the same day. All of these practices impact workers' ability to plan and do other activities, essentially stealing their nonwork time, which could be spent on other paid employment, managing family obligations, or educational or leisure activities.

Time Theft and Income Insecurity

Analogous to wage theft, time theft practices also have material implications by shaping workers' income (in)stability, including fluctuating hours. As a result of unstable scheduling practices, retail workers rarely have reliable total hours per week. Of retail workers surveyed, 44 percent reported that their hours fluctuated by up to 10 h from one week to the next, and nearly one-third reported fluctuations of 11–20 h difference from week to week. Thirteen percent experienced even greater instability, with weekly hours that varied by more than 20 h per week. These fluctuations result in income insecurity. Of retail workers surveyed, 48 percent were late in paying a bill because they were not earning enough to consistently cover their expenses. As a result of fluctuations in hours and income, retail workers struggle to pay bills, borrow money from family or friends, use credit cards, take out loans, and utilize other practices that create financial instability in the long term (Corser 2017).

Time theft also points to the denial of wanted work hours and full-time status, signaling underwork. In our survey, about half of retail workers wanted more hours than they were assigned. For part-time workers, that need is even greater, with 59 percent reporting they needed more hours, as compared to one-third of full-time workers. Of those surveyed who wanted more hours, the majority specifically wanted to work forty or more hours per week, which underscores the prevalence of underwork in the retail sector (Alexander and Haley-Lock 2015). These part-time workers who want to be full-time employees but are not consistently assigned enough hours to qualify as such are known as involuntary part-time workers. One grocery store worker shared, "I would like to have more hours or become full-time so I don't have to work two jobs." Part-time retail workers are particularly vulnerable to time theft, as their unstable schedule leads to fluctuating hours and unpredictable income, thus forcing low-wage workers to seek additional employment. Yet it also limits their capacity to work elsewhere as it makes it more challenging to juggle two work schedules. Relatedly, more than one-quarter of workers are not guaranteed a minimum number of hours. When asked what they would change about their workplace, one worker in a nonfood retail store stated that she would like the law to guarantee workers a minimum "of 30 hours or more. It's crazy to sometimes only work 4-hour shifts." Inadequate hours due to a lack of guaranteed minimum hours result in involuntary part-time work, a form of time theft.

Concomitantly, managers' hiring practices also contribute to the lack of reliable and sufficient hours. About one in three workers reported that the stores where they work have hired new employees to fill shifts that incumbent workers would be willing to take. One nonfood retail worker noted that managers cut hours of long-term employees at his store while hiring new employees. A drugstore worker shared that this practice created tension among coworkers, especially when existing employees were required to train new employees. One nonfood retail worker explained how this practice divides workers:

> New hires get a set schedule and no weekends, and I've been there 16 years, and I don't have a set schedule. Someone who is a new hire and has a set schedule within only 3 months! You don't get training pay when you have to train someone new.

Additionally, workers reported that new hires' hours are also reduced over time. By hiring new workers instead of giving more hours to existing workers, employers are able to increase the number of involuntary part-time workers who are expected to have open availability.

Unpredictable shifts, unreliable total hours per week, and increasing schedule variation over time compound to create income insecurity (Golden 2016; Zeytinoglu et al. 2004; Zukin and Van Horn 2015). Based on a national study of retail workers, a part-time worker earning $10.49 per hour who reported working a range of 16–29 h per week could be paid $300 one week and only about half that the following week (Corser 2017). Retail workers often work multiple jobs to make ends meet (Ben-Ishai, Marchena Lopez, and Michel 2017). One retail worker, who was also a full-time student, reported that although the flexibility of part-time work was important to balance school and work, not having enough hours or adequate schedule notice affected their ability to afford living independently.

The impact of time theft on income can be especially unsettling for the many retail workers who provide financial support to others or who are the sole earners in their households. Our survey found that over one-third of retail workers were the only income providers in their households. The majority of these workers had at least one family member who relied on them, and among all workers, 62 percent supported at least one other family member. In that study, 40 percent of working parents encountered difficulties paying for childcare. A study focused on hourly retail and fast-food workers in San Francisco found that they relied on grandparents and other relatives for informal childcare support because workers could not afford professional childcare services (Carrillo et al. 2017). Similarly, our survey found that over half of retail workers were likely to tap into informal childcare networks, such as family members or neighbors. One-third utilized more formal structures like school or childcare programs, but almost half (45 percent) of working parents were locked out of those programs because of unpredictable work schedules. And 85 percent did not receive any dependent care benefits or other subsidies to pay for childcare. In addition to the need for policies that directly address variable scheduling, a reexamination of the family-care safety-net system is required. Retail workers need more flexible options with simpler streamlined requirements so they can access quality programs.

Employers manage their labor costs by controlling workers' time and hours. As illustrated in the sections above, contemporary retail scheduling practices, such as failure to provide adequate notice, last-minute changes, shift cancellations, clopening, split shifts, and the expectation of open and on-demand availability, can all be understood as time theft practices, resulting in the loss of control for workers of both their scheduled work time and anticipatory work time and any sense of personal time. Crucially, employer practices of time theft can mean that low-wage workers do not see the results of policy gains in other areas, such as increased minimum wage (Table 3).

Table 3. Time Theft Typology Practices as Illustrated by L.A. Retail Worker Scheduling Survey.

Time Theft through unstable but scheduled work hours	Time Theft through control of workers' time off the job
Short notice of work schedules - 77% of workers received schedules with a week or less notice - 24% received just 1-3 days notice	Expectations of open availability - 62% of workers reported they were expected to keep their schedules open. As a result of open availability and unstable scheduling: - 84% of workers did not have a set weekly schedule - 72% of workers' scheduled work days varied week to week - 69% of workers' scheduled start and end times varied week to week - 44% of workers' number of scheduled hours fluctuated week to week by 10 or more hours/week
Last minute employer-initiated changes to work schedules - 64% of workers reported their managers changed their schedules after posting them - 50% received changes with less than 1 day notice - 33% received changes with less than 2 hours notice - 16% had their shifts canceled altogether with less than 1 day notice	On-demand scheduling - 60% of workers had been called in to work on their scheduled day(s) off.
Inadequate rest time - 20% of workers were scheduled for split shifts - 61% who were scheduled to close and then open the next day had <10 hrs rest	On-call scheduling practices - 20% of retail workers surveyed reported they were expected to be on call - 16% were expected to call in to learn whether they were working the same day

Reclaiming Stolen Time: Labor Movements Addressing the Gaps

Examining labor organizing from the perspective of time theft also allows us to understand how new paradigms in worker movements shift labor policy discourse, including the construction of time and the contemporary limitations of the FLSA. Worker movements have begun to address the issue of time theft in numerous cities and regions across the United States, focusing on a suite of scheduling policies using the framework of "fair workweek." Specifically, alternative labor organizations and worker centers have led the fight against time theft through retail worker organizing and policy advocacy since the mid-2000s, in collaboration with unions and/or the FWI (Cobble 2010; Cordero-Guzman, Izvanariu, and Narro 2013; Figart 2017; Fine 2006, 2007, 2015; Ikeler and Fullin 2018). The FWI, part of the Center for Popular Democracy, has argued that the nation's workplace protections are out of sync with the rapid changes in the retail, health care, and food service industries and the needs of working families (Sen and Razza 2015).[12] In other words, FWI advocates for restoring a fair workweek instead of current employer practices that "play games with working families' time, and force moms and students to scramble with increasingly uncertain work schedules" (Fair Workweek Initiative [FWI], n.d.).

Unionization in retail was long largely concentrated in department stores, where unionized workers were more likely to have access to full-time hours and stable schedules, but attacks on these unions and industry shifts to big box retailers and away from department stores coincided with the rise in unstable scheduling (Coulter 2013; Ikeler 2016b). In recent years, retail workers have pursued multiple organizing strategies, including unionization as well as through occupation and sector-based associations (Coulter 2013). The Retail Action Project (RAP), the most storied example of contemporary organizing in the retail sector, was one of the first alternative labor organizations to address the issue of time and scheduling in the retail industry. Based in New York, RAP is a worker association that connects retail workers in their occupational identity outside of a specific store (Ikeler 2014). RAP formed in 2005 through a community-labor partnership between the Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Union of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) and a Lower East Side community-based organization (Figart 2017; Ikeler and Fullin 2018). Though it initially organized against wage theft, including worker-initiated lawsuits for stolen back wages (Ikeler and Fullin 2018), RAP knew that regulating wage theft was not enough to address the repeated and structural occurrence of time theft. In 2017, RAP organized for and achieved fair scheduling policies in New York City (Ikeler 2014); this set the stage for future labor-community coalitions seeking to pass a suite of predictive scheduling laws across the country, including Los Angeles (Schneider and Harknett 2019a; Wolfe, Jones, and Cooper 2018). The continuation of such efforts in Los Angeles provides hope that retail workers can win stable schedules in advance and be compensated for their stolen time.

Since 2016, Los Angeles retail workers have joined a coalition to push for legislation that stops time theft. FWLA is comprised of labor, community groups, health advocates, and retail workers fighting for a comprehensive scheduling policy in the retail industry.[13] Expanding on efforts in other cities to prohibit last-minute schedule changes and require time off for worker emergencies, the coalition launched a policy campaign in early spring of 2019, which became a proposed bill in summer 2019. Los Angeles City Councilmember Curren D. Price Jr. declared the need for such a policy:

> L.A. retail workers live in economic uncertainty, making it difficult to predict their income, make time for school, or care for their families. These workers should have the right to stability, predictability, and flexibility in their work schedules. It's time the city of Los Angeles support retail employees by adopting a Fair Workweek policy (City News Service 2019).

Connecting time with economic insecurity, Councilmember Price lays bare how workers' time is stolen from them, whether in relation to their ability to plan or their ability to predict their hours and thus income.

Alexander and Haley-Lock (2015) point out that scheduling policies enacted at the federal level could ultimately address the concerns of underwork not protected by the FLSA, yet congress failed to pass the Schedules that Work Act in 2017 (National Partnerships for Families 2017). Even on a statewide level, only Oregon has been able to enact comprehensive fair scheduling legislation, though California made attempts in 2015 and 2017 (Ben-Ishai, Marchena Lopez, and Michel 2017; Schneider and Harknett 2019a; Wolfe, Jones, and Cooper 2018).[14] The city, then, remains the scale and model for legislating time theft within the retail industry. In California, the first of the predictive scheduling bills, the Formula Retail Employee Rights ordinances, was passed in San Francisco in 2014, with Emeryville and San Jose soon to follow with similar legislation (Ben-Ishai, Marchena Lopez, and Michel 2017; Schneider and Harknett 2019a; Wolfe, Jones, and Cooper 2018).[15] The San Francisco bills address the core components of time theft by requiring chain stores to provide schedules 2 weeks in advance. Furthermore, San Franscico's policies include a penalty component that provides workers some compensation for any shifts changed within 7 days (Alexander and Haley-Lock 2015).

Across the United States, fair workweek laws vary widely both in terms of provisions and in terms of workers covered. Most specify employers of a certain size and in particular industries. Most policies that have passed include combinations of the following requirements to address time theft issues: (1) advance notice and posting of schedules in advance, (2) adequate time to rest between clopening and split shifts; (3) forbidding cancelled shifts and/or offering compensation through reporting pay for cancelled shifts; (4) reporting pay required for being asked to work within a certain number of hours, (5) forbidding on-call work, (6) a good faith estimate of hours upon hiring or the stronger requirement of a mutually agreed upon minimum number of hours, (7) offering retail workers the right to request and decline hours, and (8) offering available hours to existing employees before hiring new workers. While comprehensive legislation that includes all of these provisions with adequate funding for education and enforcement could address both aspects of time theft, many existing policies do not include all of the above components nor such funding, and only cover specific employers in particular industries.

At the June 25, 2019 Los Angeles Economic Development Committee hearing, the FWLA Workweek coalition spoke to the need for fair scheduling, and the proposed policy at hand. The proposed policy, which was to be revisited in Spring 2020, sought to address the first aspect of time theft, requiring 2-week advance notice of a schedule and 10 h rest between shifts, as well as the second aspect, requiring an estimate of weekly hours at time of hire, potential for full-time work, and predictability pay. It also spoke to core issues of workers' stolen time with the right to decline hours before *and* after a schedule is posted, as well as antiretaliation for workers who exercise their rights. Though the policy limits the scope of implementation to those retail stores with 300 or more employees globally, the policy also importantly includes an enforcement mechanism.

Key members of FWLA who spoke at the hearing included the Los Angeles Worker Center Network (LAWCN), the network responsible for Los Angeles' Wage Theft ordinance in 2015. Eli Longnecker, the LAWCN coordinator, made the connections between wage theft and time theft in terms of workers' stolen time:

> We know that unfair and irregular scheduling practices are an unacknowledged form of wage theft, which we typically think of as failure to pay the minimum wage or overtime wages, for example. Lost hours are lost wages, which exacerbates economic insecurity. Working people become vulnerable to hunger and/or homelessness when they cannot plan around a set income. All retail workers deserve fair schedules that promote social and economic security.

In naming how "lost hours as lost wages," LAWCN and ultimately FWLA note how the unfairness of schedules is about time and planning as much as it is about having a set income for "social and economic security." The efforts of FWLA advance new paradigms of the fairness of time in worker movements, and make linkages to time theft in their advocacy for better labor policy.

As the set of city and statewide policies have demonstrated, fair workweek policies have the capacity to address concerns of time theft on a social and economic level. Additionally, the far-reaching impacts of time theft also reveal the need for additional policies to address how unstable scheduling affects workers' lives beyond the shop floor. These policies could include universal childcare, employer-provided childcare/subsidies, a lower minimum-hour threshold for health benefits, and educational scholarships and debt forgiveness arrangements. While we focus on the retail industry here, employer practices of time theft are prevalent in multiple industries. This becomes even more clear for workers who work multiple jobs across industries, with employers all expecting open availability.

Conclusion

When asked what they would change about their jobs, the majority of Los Angeles retail workers surveyed wanted a fair and humane schedule—that provides enough hours to make ends meet, that is set and consistent so they can plan their lives, that allows them to work and also care for their families, and that takes their needs into consideration. Conceptualizing time theft as the employer practices that rob workers of their time through unstable scheduling practices and the expectation of open availability, builds on the literatures on unstable and unpredictable scheduling, contingent control, and wage theft. Time theft extends those studies by interrogating how employer scheduling practices have a far reach, controlling workers' time beyond their scheduled hours, with implications for their economic stability and mobility. This conceptualization of time theft also points to the opportunity to address these practices and their impacts on workers through organizing and policy. The effects of time theft illustrate the failures of the FLSA to regulate contemporary retail work, resulting in stolen hours from underwork and unstable scheduling. In response, alternative organizing strategies, like FWLA, have successfully ameliorated some of these issues.

Time theft can be regulated and enforced to ensure that low-wage workers' lives and incomes are stabilized. Numerous localities have addressed gaps in federal labor protections by, for example, mandating paid sick leave and protections against wage theft. However, scheduling and underwork have largely been unaddressed outside of scattered Fair Workweek regulations, creating a gap that has allowed employers to control workers' time. Employer practices of time theft are prevalent beyond the retail industry and future mixed methods research should evaluate the impacts of Fair Workweek policies on employer practices of time theft in multiple industries, scheduling and income stability, and workers' ability to manage their lives.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

Notes

1 This coalition included the UCLA Labor Center, LAANE, Clínica Romero, California Work and Family Coalition, Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA), First 5 LA, National Council for Jewish Women, Los Angeles, North Hills United Methodist Church—Centro de Bienvenida, Organization United for Respect at Walmart (OUR Walmart), St. John's Well Child and Family Center, and United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 770.

2 Based on authors' calculations of County Business Pattern and Economic Census data from County Business Pattern for Los Angeles County.

3 We calculated the hourly variable for the American Community Survey (ACS) and created a low-wage variable, defined as two-thirds of the median hourly wage for full-time workers. The Los Angeles County median hourly wage for full-time workers was $20.44 in 2016; two-thirds is $13.63.

4 The state enacted a total of fifty-one policies addressing workers' rights, the environment, safety net, taxation, and infrastructure and housing, with thirty-four specifically focusing on workers' rights: wages, paid sick leave, retirement savings, worker protections, and employer responsibility (Perry 2017).

5 By 1995, sixteen of the top hundred Fortune 500 companies were mass retailers (Lichtenstein 2009).

6 In the 1990s, Walmart's incorporation of the UPC allowed it to warehouse and stock its own goods with efficiency, creating one of the "most consequential and effective users of computer processing power" (Lichtenstein 2009, p. 6).

7 New technology does not inevitably result in unstable scheduling practices. A recent experiment at the gap incorporated a cell phone app that allowed part-time associates to post shifts they were unable to work and take other shifts that had been posted. Most associates reported that they felt increased control over their work schedule, and most managers gave positive feedback for the more flexible scheduling technology (Williams, Lambert, and Kesavan 2017).

8 In 1937, 108 young women working at a Woolworth's store in Detroit famously locked down and occupied the store for 8 days. The strikers sought to raise their $0.23 hourly pay and decrease their 52 h workweek. In partnership with the Waiters' and Waitress' Union, the workers received a $5 per week pay increase and a 48 h workweek. Woolworth's was the largest retailer in the United States at the time, with 2,000 stores and 40 in Detroit alone, a scale roughly comparable to present-day Walmart (Zinn, Frank, and Kelley 2002).

9 Research justice is a framework and approach that shifts the control of knowledge production from professional researchers to the community and addresses a social justice issue. It also recognizes the community's expertise through feedback and collaboration, from initial project design and issue framing to final report production and dissemination.

10 For example, workers who work multiple jobs may end up clopening with a closing shift at one job and an opening shift at another (Fredericksen 2015).

11 In 2015, attorneys initiated an inquiry into on-call practices that targeted fifteen retailers. Nine reported they did not use them or were phasing them out, but six did use them. Victoria's Secret was sued in 2014 in California, and workers won a $12 million settlement. At the time, California already had established "reporting pay." "Reporting pay" is a form of wages that compensate employees who are scheduled to report to work but who are not put to work or furnished with less than half of their usual or scheduled day's work because of inadequate scheduling or lack of proper notice by the employer.

12 Sen and Razza (2015) posit that low-wage workers like restaurant servers, retail sales clerks, call center employees, home health care aides, and janitors cannot control the flexibility in their schedules in the same way that employees can in other industries that provide options like working from home, flex-time, and telecommuting.

13 Community and labor leaders recognized that having fought for and won a minimum wage increase ordinance including wage theft enforcement as well as bargained for contract-based wage raises, that retail workers were still not getting access to full-time, predictable

hours; they needed to pursue protecting both the quality and quantity of hours in a worker's schedule.

14 Vermont and New Hampshire have passed limited fair scheduling policies with workers' right to request schedule changes.

15 Outside of California, the cities of New York, Seattle, Philadelphia, and Chicago have also passed similar legislation.

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