

Press Release for October 18, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Emeryville Lawmakers Pass Fair Workweek Policy

The policy is the 3rd of its kind in the country to take the next step to help low-wage workers, address income inequality, and reshape part-time work

Emeryville, CA – Emeryville’s city council voted unanimously to pass a Fair Workweek policy. The City already has the highest minimum wage in the country at \$14.44 with a path to \$16. With this complimentary policy, it is one of the most progressive cities in the Bay Area to address income inequality and the crisis of underemployment. The policy will address the epidemic of low-wage part-time work and unpredictable hours in the retail and fast food industries.

A wide swath of low-wage workers, Emeryville residents, community and labor organizations, faith leaders, and research academics spoke before and during the City Council meeting to pass the Fair Workweek policy with no loopholes.

“This policy costs employers virtually nothing and does something very simple: provide working people with reliable, predictable hours,” said Jennifer Lin, Deputy Director of the East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy. “Workers will now be able to budget and be able to plan for childcare, 2nd jobs, education, and even rest.”

“When I didn’t have a regular schedule, my supervisor would put me down for only 16 hours and then schedule me last minute. I had to scramble to find childcare for my baby, and I sometimes worked six days a week and didn’t see him,” said Moriah Larkins, an Emeryville worker who has been in retail for five years. “But now I work for a different company, have regular hours, can spend time with my son, and finish my nursing degree.”

The Council passed a strong policy without loopholes, making large corporate retail chains and fast food companies provide schedules two weeks in advance so workers can budget and plan their lives. Workers will be compensated for last minute changes in schedules. When more hours are available, current workers would get priority so they can get closer to full-time work.

“Emeryville’s workers are not machines on call 24/7, and two weeks advance notice on scheduling is such a modest request,” said Jac Asher, Emeryville Councilmember. “We have four malls and only one school in our city. Everyone interacts with Emeryville’s workers. We need to hold the floor on decency for those workers.”

“Companies are trying to squeeze a few last nickels out of their labor, causing a lot of human suffering,” said Scott Donahue, Councilmember. “We need a minimum floor of human decency for employment so we can make a town we can be proud of.”

The policy is the first in the East Bay and third in the country following San Francisco and Seattle. The policy will go into effect in July 2017.

Earlier this year, the coalition unveiled a study co-authored by the Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE), Center for Popular Democracy (CPD) and the East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy (EBASE). It revealed that 68% of workers are only receiving part-time hours; 2/3 want more hours; and a staggering 80% have hours that fluctuate from week to week.

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<http://www.acceaction.org>

The Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE) Action is a grassroots, member-led, statewide community organization working with more than 10,000 members across California. ACCE is dedicated to raising the voices of everyday Californians, neighborhood by neighborhood, to fight for the policies and programs we need to improve our communities and create a brighter future.

www.workingeastbay.org

The East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy (EBASE) advances economic, racial, and social justice by building a just economy in the East Bay based on good jobs and healthy communities. We address the root causes of economic injustice by developing strategic alliances among community, labor, and people of faith to build power and create change with low-income workers and communities of color.

www.populardemocracy.org

The Center for Popular Democracy promotes equity, opportunity, and a dynamic democracy in partnership with innovative base-building organizations, organizing networks and alliances, and progressive unions across the country. CPD builds the strength and capacity of democratic organizations to envision and advance a pro-worker, pro-immigrant, racial justice agenda.

www.fairworkweek.org

The Fair Workweek Initiative, anchored by the Center for Popular Democracy and CPD Action, is driving the growing momentum to restore a workweek that enables working families to thrive.