

Leaving an abusive partner can pose nearly insurmountable barriers for many women, but for Niagara County women affected by abuse; economic instability, finding and affording quality childcare, and a lack of reliable transportation poses significant challenges to personal and financial empowerment. On-call or call-in scheduling amplifies these barriers by increasing the uncertainty a survivor of domestic violence experiences by removing familiar routines and predictable schedules as she works to regain control in her life.

57% of all working Niagara County women¹ are employed in sales or service related occupations where call-in scheduling is most prevalent. For women who work two or more jobs to make ends meet, which makes up 70% of all YWCA program participants; women who struggle to pay for ever-increasing childcare costs, and who navigate a woefully inadequate public transportation system on-call scheduling can bring this precarious balancing act crashing to the ground. When a working mother is called off of work, hours or mere minutes, before her shift she is still obligated to pay for childcare, regardless of if she uses it. Or if she is expected to stay past her scheduled hours she must arrange additional child care, or pay increased penalties and late fees. When average childcare in Niagara County is \$185 each week, every dollar matters.² For women navigating public transportation in Niagara County this can mean hours on a bus that are wasted, and it makes attending school or job training classes nearly impossible without predictable work hours.

The Work Scheduling Study from the University of Chicago³ finds that the more hours' employees work, and the less the hours fluctuate, the longer employees stay with the employer. For a woman who may have been prevented from working or obtaining a degree, stable work hours can help her build a resume, a career, and an independent life. The study also finds schedule predictability is related to

¹ US Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Study 5 year estimates.

² Childcare of Niagara County, <http://www.childcareofniagara.com/UserFiles/File/FAIR%20MARKET%20RATES%202017.pdf>

³ The Work Scheduling Study, <https://ssascholars.uchicago.edu/work-scheduling-study/content/key-findings>

employee well-being and work-life outcomes. Employees with less predictable work schedules report higher levels of stress, greater work-to-family conflict, and more disruptions in non-work activities. For survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, who may be dealing with the effects of traumatic stress and events; increased stress, conflict, and disrupted routines can have a substantial impact on their personal, and professional, well-being. The WSS also finds that over 80 percent of staffing hours in the retail sector stay the same from month to month; so the substantial difficulties posed by call-in scheduling are not necessary in most firms.

We urge Governor Cuomo and Commissioner Reardon to continue the progress already made on protecting Niagara County workers. By reminding employers of Department of Labor standards requiring employees to be paid a minimum for showing up to the worksite, and investigating labor abuses, working women are protected from the volatility of call-in scheduling. We also encourage the Governor to continue to research how call-in scheduling affects the most vulnerable New Yorkers, including survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. We must find a way to support working women as they navigating the path to financial empowerment by increasing the predictability in work hours and strengthen protections designed to safe-guard hard working New Yorkers and help them gain control over their lives.