

Written Testimony of Representative Bobby Scott (VA-03)
Make It in America: What's Next?
PANEL 1: Rebuilding America's Promise

Thank you, Mr. Hoyer, for inviting me here today for this important discussion. We need to have more of these discussions about what needs to change so that the American people can share in the prosperity they worked so hard to create.

But unfortunately, our colleagues across the aisle are focused on other things -- on making it harder for workers to form a union, attempting more than 60 times to roll back the ACA, and giving tax breaks to the wealthy. And they've wasted millions of taxpayer dollars on the Benghazi Committee -- a misguided political charade.

Meanwhile, families all across America are struggling to make ends meet. Angela in Cleveland took three sick days with the stomach flu -- and it's a good thing she stayed home because she's a teacher. But three sick days was all she had. So the next time she got the flu, she went to work sick because her job depended on it. And she watched the illness infect many of the students in her classroom. I have received stories from working people like Angela all over the country who are giving their all at work, but can't seem to get a shred of dignity in return.

India Ford, from my district, spoke to Members yesterday about how she worked nights and weekends for nearly a dozen years in the restaurant industry. As a single mom, this meant not being there for homework, PTA meetings, and or even to put her daughter to bed. Finally, she got a new job with a manager who offered to give her a schedule that worked for her family -- and what do you think she asked for? The lunch shift! Thanks to this simple change now she is home with her daughter at night -- and she is able to go to school events.

But basic protections like fair schedules and paid sick days shouldn't depend on winning the boss lottery. They should be the fundamental right of every American.

That's why yesterday, together with many of my Democratic colleagues, I launched the Working Families Agenda. The Working Families Agenda calls on Congress to deliberate on the responsible solutions that hardworking Americans want and need. In my written testimony, I've included a few fact sheets setting out the Working Families Agenda which includes legislation that would boost wages; help workers better balance work and family; and level the playing field so that all workers have a chance to succeed.

Thank you, Mr. Hoyer, for joining me yesterday for the Working Families Day of Action where we heard the facts and evidence in support of these policies.

It's time to start putting people and their families first in America and that's what the Working Families Agenda does.

It's been a very long time since most people got a raise. We need to pass legislation to raise the minimum wage. When workers try to organize and form a union to negotiate for their fair share, more than a third of the time, someone gets fired during the organizing drive. The Workplace Action for a Growing Economy (WAGE) Act puts real teeth into the law so that employers think twice before they retaliate.

We need to help workers better balance work and family life. Nearly 40 percent of the workforce doesn't have a single paid sick day. And in Virginia, my state, 20 percent of workers get their schedules with only three days' notice or less.

We need federal paid sick days and paid family and medical leave laws which 80 percent of the public supports. And workers need flexible and predictable schedules – that's why I cosponsored the Schedules that Work Act with Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro.

It's past time to level the playing field so that all working families have a fair shot. Women overall still earn only 79 cents for every dollar earned by white, non-Hispanic men. African-American women earn 60 cents and Latinas earn 55 cents for every dollar earned by a white, non-Hispanic man. The wage gap costs families nearly \$11,000 a year. That could be the difference being able to afford child care or pay the rent. It is simply unacceptable that in 2015, pay discrimination is still holding working families back. We must strengthen protections from discrimination so that all working families have a fair shot.

I think we can all agree that working people deserve more than just a paycheck – they deserve a decent life.

It's time rewrite the rules to make the economy work for the rest of us. And that's why we will introduce a resolution calling on Congress to hold hearings and votes on the Working Families Agenda. And we won't stop there.

For as long as it takes, we will call on our colleagues across the aisle to take up the responsible policies that will help people make a better life for themselves and their families.

Thank you.



FACT SHEET: Balancing Work and Family

It is time to adopt workplace policies to help workers achieve a better balance between work and family life. The world has changed a lot in the last 30 to 40 years, but the workplace has not.

- In more than 60 percent of households with children, all adults are working. But the United States has failed to adopt federal workplace policies that reflect this reality.
- The U.S. remains the world's only wealthy nation that does not mandate a minimum of paid sick leave, vacation leave or parental leave.
- Nationally, nearly 4-in-10 private sector workers – or 39 percent – do not have access to any sick leave at all. This amounts to more than 43 million workers across the country.
- Among early career workers, 41 percent of hourly workers receive their schedules only 7 days in advance.
- More than one-third of parents believe they've been "passed over" for a promotion, raise, or a new job due to the need for a flexible work schedule.
- Without basic protections like paid sick days, paid family leave, and flexible and predictable schedules, many working parents are one illness or accident away from losing their jobs.
- The average cost of center-based daycare in the United States is \$11,666 per year. Too many families simply cannot afford the cost of child care, and are forced to leave their children in the cheapest care available, putting their well-being at risk.
- Only 29 percent of America's 4-year-olds were enrolled in a state-funded preschool program in 2014. Less than half of eligible low-income preschoolers are actually served by Head Start, and less than 5 percent are in Early Head Start. Meanwhile, only about 25 percent of low-income families with children under the age of six who are eligible to get childcare subsidies actually receive them.

The Working Families Agenda includes legislation to achieve *a better balance between work and family life* so that people never have to choose between their income and their health or their children.

- The **Healthy Families Act** guarantees workers the right to earn up to seven paid sick days to care for themselves or a loved one who is sick, or to take time off to address domestic violence.
- The **Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act** ensures that workers can take paid family and medical leave when they need it to care for a new child or for themselves or a relative with a serious health condition.
- The **Schedules that Work Act** provides flexible, predictable and stable work schedules.
- The **Strong Start for America's Children Act** gives working families access to high-quality, early-learning opportunities, and more affordable, stable child care.

If we want strong families, we need to address the realities that working families face today. Congress has the power to enact responsible policies that would help Americans achieve a better balance between work and family life.



FACT SHEET: Boosting Wages

A raise is long overdue for most hardworking Americans. It is past time to *boost wages* so that working families can make ends meet.

- Between 1948 and 1973, American workers' productivity increased by almost 97 percent, and hourly compensation increased by 91 percent – growing at nearly equal rates. But from 1973 to 2014, productivity increased by 72 percent, while hourly compensation only grew by 9 percent. The rich have continued to get richer while the rest of America is just treading water.
- In our country, no one who works full-time should have to live in poverty. But working full-time at the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour leaves a family of three in poverty.
- One of the biggest factors suppressing wage growth for workers over the last four decades has been the decline in union density. In the mid-1950s, the percentage of workers belonging to a union was at 33 percent. But from 1973 to 2007, private sector union density in the U.S. decreased from 34 percent to 8 percent for men, and from 16 percent to 6 percent for women. This decline is largely the result of employer interference with workers' attempts to organize and form a union.
- Employees who are misclassified as independent contractors are often cheated out of their pay and denied critical employment protections. In 2009, GAO estimated that misclassification cost the federal government \$2.72 billion in revenue in one year.

The Working Families Agenda includes legislation that would *boost wages* by raising the minimum wage, making it possible for workers to bargain for a fair deal at work, and keeping employers from cheating working people out of their pay.

- The **Raise the Wage Act** increases the minimum wage and abolishes the outdated tipped minimum wage. Raising the minimum wage to \$12 by 2020 will help more families make ends meet, expand economic opportunity, and build an economy that works for all families, not just the wealthiest few. Raising the minimum wage over the next five years means that nearly 35 million workers will get a raise, generating more than \$110 billion in economic activity. It would especially benefit workers of color and women, who make up a disproportionate share of the low-wage workforce.
- The **Workplace Action for a Growing Economy (WAGE) Act** would strengthen workers' ability to collectively bargain for higher wages and better working conditions. Restoring workers' ability to form a union is critical to raising wages since, on average, unionized workers earn \$207 a week more than their non-union counterparts.
- The **Payroll Fraud Prevention Act** would end improper classification of employees as independent contractors, restoring workplace protections for millions of employees who have been misclassified.

When working families have money in their pockets, they buy food, houses, and other goods and services—creating jobs for their fellow Americans. Hardworking people deserve more than just living paycheck to paycheck. These policies will help ensure that all working families get their fair shot at the American Dream.



FACT SHEET: Leveling the Playing Field

It is time to *level the playing field* so that every American has a fair shot at success.

- Discrimination remains a persistent barrier to working families' ability to get ahead. Five decades after the Equal Pay Act, on average, women who work full-time, year-round make only 78 cents for every dollar paid to their white male counterparts. The wage gap is much worse for African American and Hispanic women. Compared to their white male counterparts, African American women only earn 62 cents on the dollar, and Hispanic women earn just 54 cents on the dollar. The wage gap costs working families more than \$11,000 a year and more than \$400,000 over a woman's lifetime.
- Two-thirds of first-time mothers are in the workforce today and 82 percent of pregnant workers work into their third trimester. But all too often, pregnant workers are denied simple adjustments at work that they need to continue working safely during pregnancy—like a stool to sit during a very long shift, or the ability to stay off high ladders.
- Despite tremendous legal progress, LGBT Americans lack explicit legal protections from workplace discrimination on the basis of their gender and sexual orientation, and may have no resource if they are fired.

The Working Families Agenda includes legislation that would *level the playing field* by strengthening protections from discrimination.

- The **Paycheck Fairness Act** strengthens protections from pay discrimination, helping women and their families make ends meet. Equal pay for equal work could mean giving a family the chance to save for retirement, own a home, or afford child care.
- The **Pregnant Workers Fairness Act** makes unmistakably clear that women can get reasonable job accommodations when they need them to continue working safely during pregnancy. The right to these accommodations could make all the difference to a woman's ability to have a healthy pregnancy and provide for her growing family.
- The **Equality Act** makes explicit that employees are protected from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Equal treatment for LGBT employees means no one will have to risk losing their jobs simply because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

These responsible policies will help ensure that all hardworking Americans have the opportunity to make a better life for themselves and their families.



COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE DEMOCRATS

Working Families Day of Action

Tuesday, October 27, 2015

12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

October is National Work and Family Month, which presents an excellent opportunity to promote the many critical policy solutions that would strengthen working families and enable them to succeed. The **Working Families Day of Action** will show robust support during the month of October for the **Working Families Agenda**.

The **Working Families Agenda** will:

- **Boost wages.** American workers are more productive than ever but they are still not seeing their fair share of the wealth they create. The Agenda includes the *Raise the Wage Act* to increase the minimum wage and abolish the outdated tipped minimum wage; the *Workplace Action for a Growing Economy (WAGE) Act* to strengthen workers' ability to collectively bargain for higher wages and better working conditions; and the *Payroll Fraud Prevention Act* to end the misclassification of employees as independent contractors which leads to the erosion of wages and benefits.
- **Help workers create better work-life balance.** The world has changed a lot in the last 30 to 40 years, but the workplace has not. If we want strong families, we need to address the realities working parents face today. The Agenda includes policies to ensure that no worker has to choose between their income and their health or their children. The *Healthy Families Act* guarantees workers the right to earn up to seven paid sick days to care for themselves or a loved one who is sick; the *Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act* ensures that workers can take paid family and medical leave when they need it; the *Schedules that Work Act* provides flexible, predictable and stable work schedules; and the *Strong Start for America's Children Act* gives workers access to high-quality, early-learning opportunities, and more affordable, stable child care.
- **Level the playing field.** Discrimination remains a persistent barrier to working families' ability to get ahead. The Agenda includes the *Paycheck Fairness Act* which strengthens protections from pay discrimination to help close the wage gap; the *Pregnant Workers Fairness Act* which ensures that women can get reasonable job accommodations when they need them to continue working safely during pregnancy; and the *Equality Act* which makes unmistakably clear that workplace discrimination against LGBT individuals is illegal.

The primary goal for this day will be to show the tremendous solidarity and support for these responsible solutions, as a package of legislative proposals.

Events and Actions:

- 12 to 1 p.m. — #WorkingFamilies Tweetstorm
- 1 to 2:30 p.m. — Forum with Chris Lu, Deputy Secretary of Labor; Fatima Goss Graves of the National Women's Law Center, Liz Shuler of the AFL-CIO, Dorian Warren, Roosevelt Institute Fellow, Bruce "Buz" Grossberg, Owner of Buz and Ned's Real BBQ of Richmond, VA, and Marvin Monge, a Bricklayer, in Canon 210, hosted by the Committee on Education and the Workforce Democrats.
- 2:45 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.— Press Conference at the House Triangle with Leader Pelosi, Ranking Member Bobby Scott, Reps. Rosa DeLauro, Linda Sanchez, Hakeem Jeffries, and Keith Ellison, India Ford from Buz and Ned's Real BBQ, and Vicki Shabo from the National Partnership for Women and Families.
- October 28th — Special Order Hour. This Special Order will involve Members reading stories from their states about the need for the policies that strengthen working families.
- The introduction of a congressional resolution in support of the Working Families Agenda.