

Committee Secretary

Senate Standing Committees on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

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Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

Australia

Submission to the Inquiry into the Fair Work Amendment (Small Business-Penalty Rates Exemption) Bill 2012

I am a permanent employee, working as a RN Discharge Planner, currently earning around \$37 per hour.

I have a family, 2 children, a mortgage, a car, bills to pay, house to maintain, food and Education to pay for.

If penalty rates were abolished the entitlements I would get would not be worth working as a nurse any longer, AS a nurse you give so much of yourself to helping others that you need some form of compensation to keep you in the industry, without penalty rates I doubt nurses would stay in the profession, hence the government would lose a huge percentage of its highly skilled workers, that even the government officials may need one day, no one is above needing specialised health workers.

A nurses wage would drop considerably without the weekend or other shift penalties.

My weekends are important to me because I have a family and when working a 24/7 roster a weekend is precious, As a nurse working weekends you often miss out on sporting achievements of your children, of seeing them enjoy a weekend, of just enjoying some time with them, the missing out on special occasions such as birthdays, Easter and more importantly Christmas Day! There is nothing as bad as working christmas day when you have a family and they are waiting for you to come home before they can celebrate.

Night shift on a weekend is even worse as you feel as if you are sleeping your life away and missing out on life.

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates as this is the only reason I continue to be a nurse to know that if I ever need to earn a bit more, I could work a weekend and bring in extra needed finances or work overtime, or an afternoon shift or night shift, Nurses work such long hard hours, trying to keep patients safe, trying to find reasons to keep people alive, or resuscitating someone if they have slipped close to the edge of life, we hold the hand of the dying, hug the grieving and squeeze a chest back pleadingly back into life, these shift penalties are all we have to keep us in the profession, could our politicians in power wanting to strip these away from us, do the same?

Submitted by

Deborah Chant

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