

Committee Secretary

Senate Standing Committees on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

PO Box 6100

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 employee, working as a Store Manager, currently earning around \$18.00 per hour.

I'm 38 years old and renting with my partner. We try to save but as we both work retail it's tough. I work a regular 5 days a week and spend Saturdays with my stepson. I'm heading back to school next year and hope to reduce my hours a little so studying won't be so hard.

If penalty rates were abolished we would find it impossible to get ahead. As it stands I work 1 night a week and every Sunday and we still often live pay-check to pay-check. I elected to work nights and Sundays as I'll get penalty rates. I'd rather a weekday job but retail is where I am right now and I have to make sacrifices somewhere.

My weekends are important to me because everybody needs time out. I spend my weekends in the garden, seeing friends and family and going to see live music (my partner is in a band). I often miss Saturday evening or Sunday gigs as I have to work. I try to see my extended family and friends on weekdays. I haven't had a full footy membership for 5 years because my roster isn't stable enough to accommodate it. My birthday is in December but I celebrate in November or January as all my friends are too exhausted and busy to celebrate in the Christmas season.

I urge the committee to keep penalty rates. Everyone deserves a weekend. I know that many retailers say it's a seven-day world but I don't think it should be. Weekends and Friday nights are when we have fun, when we get to be people, not just sellers or servers. Friday night is for fun, Saturday is for friends and family, it's when we go to weddings and barbeques and footy. Sunday should be family day, kicking back in the yard or going to the nursery, cooking up some chili and making sure the kids homework is done. Whatever you do with your weekends from - gigs to church - weekends are special and they need to remain that way. Those of us who choose to work in the service industries make sacrifices with our time but we get a little back for that. By getting rid of penalty rates you effectively tell us that our time is less valuable than that of people who have 9-5, 5 day a week jobs. We are not less valuable and our time needs to be respected. We are the ones who make the coffee and the cocktails, sell you the bread and the cheese, sell you the picture-hooks and the Christmas tree. Please respect our need to be paid a fair wage for sacrificing our weekends and evenings. Please reject this bill.

Submitted by

Terri Berends

Sunday 23rd of September 2012