

March 14, 2024

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Chair
U.S. Senate Committee on Health,
Education, Labor, & Pensions
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Cassidy
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Health,
Education, Labor, & Pensions
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Sanders and Ranking Member Cassidy:

The undersigned organizations write to express our concerns with the “Thirty-Two Hour Workweek Act.” The bill’s provisions would exacerbate the current worker shortage and dramatically increase inflationary pressures. The result would be a deterioration in spending power for American families, a decline in the availability of goods and services—including critical services—and diminished competitiveness internationally.

Reducing the standard workweek from 40 to 32 hours would result in a decline in productivity. Companies would have to adjust by finding additional workers, increasing prices to account for increased labor costs, and producing fewer goods and services. Consumers would feel the impact as costs increase and services are reduced across industries, including construction, retail, and hospitality and critical services, such as childcare, education, healthcare, government, and security. Many of these industries require worker coverage 24 hours a day and seven days a week and already struggle to meet demands. To cover the lost work hours, industries would need to hire more labor, which is already a challenge due to the existing significant labor shortage. There are currently 1.4 job openings for every unemployed worker in the U.S.¹ In January 2024, the Health Care and Social Assistance and Leisure and Hospitality industries alone had 1.9 and 1.1 million open jobs, respectively.² The inevitable result of this bill would be fewer services and increased prices for consumers at a time when inflation is already high.³

Given these concerns, we strongly urge the Committee to reconsider this legislation and focus instead on measures that will alleviate, rather than exacerbate, inflationary pressures and the current workforce shortage.

Sincerely,

American Hotel & Lodging Association

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, “The Employment Situation – February 2024,” March 8, 2024, available at <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empst.pdf>.

² Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Job Openings and Labor Turnover Summary,” March 6, 2024, available at <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/jolts.nr0.htm>.

³ The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) rose 0.4% in February 2024, the largest increase since September, to 3.2%. The Federal Reserve aims for an inflation rate of 2%, which the United States has not experienced since before the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. See Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Consumer Price Index Summary,” March 12, 2024, available at <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/cpi.nr0.htm>.

Associated Builders and Contractors
Associated General Contractors of America
International Foodservice Distributors Association
International Franchise Association
National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors
National Federation of Independent Business
National Restaurant Association
National Retail Federation