

Submitter: Catie Theisen  
On Behalf Of: Mike Burlingham  
Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business  
Measure: SB1513

Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Knopp and members of the committee,

My name is Mike Burlingham, I am a 14 year worker at the Nabisco plant in NE Portland. I currently work in the pest control department but I've worked in several departments over the years.

Forced overtime has been a long standing practice in this facility, along with the other bakeries across our network. It has been "a right of passage" for everyone, not a single person here has gone unaffected by it. When I first started here, I heard stories of how this bakery used to have a "family" atmosphere.

In the years since, under a new company, a global giant in snack foods, that "family" feeling has dissipated, and what's left is a corporation telling us "their needs come first". I have 2 children ages 8 and 10. I have worked here as long as they have been alive. Both my children attended daycare from the ages of 3 months old, when my wife returned to work from maternity leave. I heavily relied on being able to get off work on time to pick up my children from daycare without going over our allotted time, otherwise, we'd have to pay a penalty. That penalty would come in several forms: we had to choose to either let our children stay and pay an "overtime" fee to the daycare. Or if I refused the forced overtime shift, I'd be penalized for attendance. Or, my wife would have to leave work early, losing her hourly wages doing so. In all scenarios, we lose. For every worker here, we are faced with a decision when forced to work overtime with little to no notice. Stay and work, and forgo our obligations, or face penalty.

In a setting such as ours in food manufacturing, our work is heavily based on demand. Snack foods have always done well. Especially during times of recession and pandemic. Due to the company's inadequate staffing, and the demand being so high, forced overtime runs rampant. In my personal experience, I was forced to work 13 hour days, every day, for 5 weeks straight. Unfortunately, my story is a rather mild case compared to some of my coworkers at 2 or 3 months straight without a day off.

Senate Bill 1513 simply makes a small shift to make sure we are not disciplined for refusing overtime if not given enough time to plan for that shift. It allows the plant to still fill its overtime needs, but helps change this ongoing culture of chronic understaffing and extreme discipline for workers.

Thank you for your time, and thank you for your support of Senate Bill 1513.