

# RESTORE OUR TIME

**Your time is the most valuable asset you have. The time you spend working takes away from the time you spend with your family, friends, and community – that’s why you get compensated for it, and why we value ideas like a “work-life balance.” But too many of us are working far more than 40 hours a week and not getting paid for it. Time is money, and today employers are taking both and getting away with it.**

## WHAT HAPPENED TO OVERTIME?

It’s one of the basic ideas our workforce was built on – if you work hard and put in extra hours, you should be paid for those hours. In the 1970s more than 60 percent of salaried full-time workers were eligible for overtime, which meant that their employers worked them fewer hours or paid them for every hour.<sup>1</sup> So when your parents stayed late at work or worked weekends and holidays, they did it to earn time-and-a-half. But today, only 7 percent of salaried full-time workers are eligible for overtime pay.<sup>2</sup>

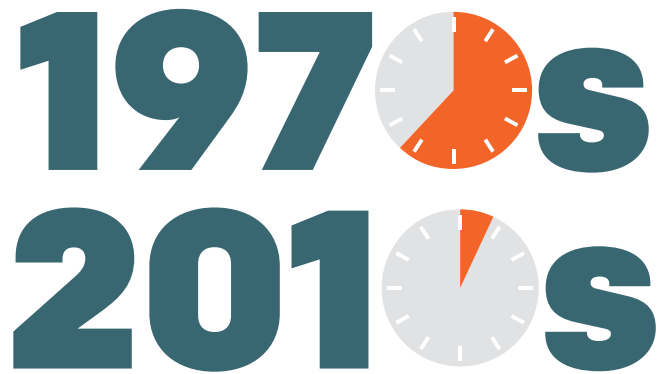
That doesn’t mean fewer people are working overtime, that just means more people are doing it for free. In fact, the average full-time salaried employee works 49 hours per week.<sup>3</sup> Over the last 40 years, we haven’t updated our overtime threshold to keep up with our economy, which means that every year more workers are working more hours for less pay. This is a great deal for employers who use our outdated standards to keep wages low while overworking their employees, but it’s a bad deal for workers and our communities.

## RESTORE OUR TIME

Gov. Jay Inslee’s Department of Labor & Industries has announced its plan to restore the salary threshold for overtime exemption to 2.5 times the minimum wage, or about \$70,000 a year in 2020 dollars. This new proposal will return protections to almost 45 percent of Washington’s salaried workers. While this falls short of the more than 60 percent that were historically covered, it is an important step for hundreds of thousands of workers across Washington to finally take back the value of their most important commodity – their time. That’s good news for workers, communities, and our economy, because a thriving Washington depends on a thriving middle class.

Restoring overtime protections in Washington will mean workers will get more time, more money, or a little bit of both. When employers have to pay for employees’ time, they value it more. That means more people will get back more time to spend with their families, more time to participate in their communities, and more time to live their lives.

## Number of Salaried Full-Time Workers Eligible for Overtime Pay



1970s: Over 60% • 2010s: 7%

<sup>1</sup> Celine McNicholas, Samantha Sanders, and Heidi Shierholz, “What’s at stake in the states if the 2016 federal raise to the overtime pay threshold is not preserved—and what states can do about it,” Economic Policy Institute, 2017, <http://bit.ly/2Lpxt6s>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Jena McGregor, “The average work week is now 47 hours,” The Washington Post, September 2, 2014, <https://wapo.st/2Lr0JKa>

Restoring the overtime threshold is especially good news for workers who have disproportionately fallen behind in wage gains.<sup>4</sup> More than 200,000 women workers in Washington state will be affected by restoring overtime protections. Millennial and Generation Y workers, who have continually lost ground to their older generational counterparts, will make up nearly 35 percent of the newly protected class of workers. And more than 200,000 workers with some or no college education will gain overtime protections under the restored threshold.

We all do better when everyone enjoys overtime protections.

We can come together, just like we have in the past, to make Washington the top-rated state in the nation to live, work, and do business.<sup>5</sup> Our lawmakers and Governor Inslee's Department of Labor & Industries need to hear from working families, business, and nonprofits that restoring overtime protections is good for workers and good for the economy.

**Pack the Public Forums** – sessions are scheduled throughout Washington during July and August, and you can show up to show your support for restoring overtime. Find a forum near you at [bit.ly/2x4LXQw](https://bit.ly/2x4LXQw)

**Submit a Comment** – the Department of Labor and Industries is accepting public comments until 5 p.m. on September 6, 2019. You can submit comments a number of ways:

- For more information,  
contact Jack Sorensen at [jack@civic-ventures.com](mailto:jack@civic-ventures.com).**

5 Scott Cohen, "Washington is America's Top State for Business in 2017," CNBC.com, July 11, 2017, updated July 14, 2017 <https://cnb.cx/2Lpt1oc>

SEPT

## 6 — Deadline for L&I Online Comments