

Labor Project *for* Working Families

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with unions to
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Flex Pack – How Unions Can Push for Worker Controlled Flexibility

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Sally Wright, 67, a greeter at the Wal-Mart in Ponca City, Oklahoma, said she quit in August after 22 years with the company when managers pushed her to make herself available to work any time, day or night. She asked to stay on the day shift, but her manager reduced her schedule from a 32-hour week to an 8-hour week and refused her pleas for more hours.

Unfortunately, this is only one example of “fake flex” policies that force workers to “flex” their lives to fit the job.

Today, more and more workers want their jobs to flex back. And they want more control over their work schedules without risking their wages, benefits or job security. How can unions make jobs more flexible? How easy is it to bargain for flextime programs? And how can unions protect job security at the same time? The **Flex Pack** – a unique NEW resource for unions from the **Labor Project for Working Families** – offers the tools for action.

Released on January 22, 2007, the **Flex Pack** is a valuable toolkit on organizing, bargaining and legislating for worker controlled flexibility.

The latest profit-making strategy of many employers is to create a cheaper and more “flexible” workforce. In the interest of the bottom line, they cap wages, force more full-time workers to become part-time labor, and force them to work increasingly irregular work schedules including working more nights and weekends. The demand that workers be available round the clock puts the company’s needs first and the needs of working families last.

More unions are now pushing for flextime. Changes in America’s labor force and economy mean that America’s working families are so stressed for time that *flextime has a great deal of organizing appeal*. Consider this:

- Americans work nearly **nine weeks (350 hours)** longer each year than Western Europeans.
- **2 out of 3** unionized fathers report that they are unhappy with the amount of time they can give their children. **Half** of the mothers feel the same way.
- Nearly **one-third** of all unionized workers say that “not enough family and personal time” is their single biggest work-related concern.
- Surveys of union members suggest that they do not feel existing flextime programs offer sufficient job guarantees – *a natural opportunity for unions to deliver a highly valued win.*

[More...]

Flextime is an opportunity for unions to respond to the most deeply felt needs of organized and unorganized workers alike.

The **Flex Pack** is organized in a user friendly, fact sheet format and contains FAQs, tips for organizers, legislative examples, case studies, contract language, as well as resources that help unions learn:

- Why union members want more job flexibility
- How to tell genuine flextime from “fake flex” gimmicks
- What specific flextime options are worth bargaining for
- When flextime can be a powerhouse organizing tool

“The bottom line is that American workplaces today no longer match the lived reality of our working families,” said Netsy Firestein, Executive Director of the Labor Project for Working Families. “Our labor union movement fought for and won the eight-hour day. Now, however, compared to other advanced economies, our working families are locked in a time vise. Something’s got to give. With the Flex Pack, unions are equipped to take action.”

To download a FREE copy or purchase a hard copy (\$5 each/bulk prices available) of the **Flex Pack**, please visit <http://www.working-families.org/organize/flexpack.html>.

You may also place orders by emailing info@working-families.org or calling (510) 643-7088.

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*The **Labor Project for Working Families** is a national nonprofit advocacy and policy organization providing education, resources and technical assistance to unions on family issues in the workplace.*

For the latest news, information, publications and resources on work and family issues visit our NEW and enriched website: www.working-families.org.