

The City of Los Angeles is home to more than 2,500 large chain fast food restaurants employing approximately 50,000 fast food workers. The fast food industry is highly profitable, but far too many fast food workers live in poverty. The effects of poverty among fast food workers, including widespread housing insecurity, is exacerbated by erratic and unpredictable work schedules, rampant non-compliance with existing California and Los Angeles worker protections and a lack of access to paid leave.

Numerous recent studies¹ provide overwhelming evidence of the difficulties fast food workers face and provide a thoroughly researched picture of an industry whose workers are in crisis:

- One in ten working homeless individuals are fast food workers.
- Nearly half of fast food workers live in overcrowded housing.
- One in four fast food workers are severely rent burdened.
- Fast food workers account for 40% of their families' income on average, despite their low wages.
- Households with fast food workers are twice as likely to fall below the federal poverty line.

Fast food workers have the most unpredictable schedules in the service sector. Nearly 75% of fast food workers experience last minute changes in their schedules as compared to 50% of other service workers. This inflicts harm on workers and their children, including income instability, increased likelihood of hunger, medical hardship and housing insecurity.

Fast food workers also experience widespread wage theft, sexual harassment, discrimination, and health and safety hazards ranging from septic flooding, dirty needles and rats, to smoke and extreme heat. Workers are frequently threatened, bullied and discriminated against. Fast food workers are frequently denied access to their sick days and are forced to work sick.

Know-your-rights training is crucial to ensure proper enforcement. While California and the City of Los Angeles have some of the nation's strongest worker protections, workers are often unaware of their rights, which makes those laws ineffective. A 2024 report by the Step Forward Foundation and SEIU found that 88% of California fast food workers do not understand their rights and protections on the job or how to access public programs; 89% have not heard about or don't know how to access their right to paid family leave; 83% have not heard about or don't know how to access workers' compensation; 80% have not heard about or don't know how to access disability insurance; and 73% do not know how much additional pay they are entitled to if they are forced to work through a meal break or rest breaks. Fast food workers often report employers providing incorrect or no information about their rights.

Improving working conditions at fast food restaurants also benefits employers. When workers know their rights, have predictable schedules, and the right to earn paid time off, employers reap the benefit of a

¹ These studies include two reports focused on fast food industry conditions prepared for the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health jointly by UC Berkeley Labor Center, UCLA Labor Center, UCLA Labor Occupational Health and Safety Program and UC Berkeley Labor Occupational Health Program ("UC 2021" and "UC 2022"); a study by Economic Roundtable focused on poverty wages and homelessness in the fast food industry ("ERT 2023"); a study by the Shift Project of UCSF and Harvard University titled, "Low Pay, Less Predictability: Fast Food Jobs in California" ("Shift/UCSF/Harvard 2022"); a study by WorkSafe and SEIU called "¡AGUANTATE!: Heat, hazards and indifference to safety in California's fast food restaurants" ("WorkSafe 2023"); a study by Step Forward Foundation and SEIU called "Knowledge is Power: Workers' Rights Trainings and the Pathway to Improving Conditions in California's Fast Food Industry" ("SFF 2024"); a Rutgers study, "Wage Theft in California: Minimum Wage Violations, 2014-2023" ("Rutgers 2024"); a report by the Fight for \$15 and a Union, "Skimmed & Scammed: Wage Theft from California's Fast Food Workers" ("FF15 2022"); and a new study coauthored by the UCLA/Harvard Shift Project and David Weil, "Compliance and the Complaint Gap: Labor Standards Violations in the California Service Sector" ("Shift/UCSF/Harvard/Weil 2024").

safer workplace and a more stable, effective workforce. Law-abiding employers face unfair competition from competitors that cut costs by depriving workers of their rightful compensation and treatment. Employers that treat their workers well should not have to fear losing out in a race to the bottom.

WE THEREFORE MOVE that the Los Angeles City Council request the City Attorney to draft an ordinance that would extend the protections of the Los Angeles Fair Work Week Ordinance to employees of fast food businesses. Fast food businesses should be defined to include all limited-service restaurants that are part of a national chain consisting of 50 or more locations nationally, including businesses that operate such restaurants pursuant to franchise agreements.

WE FURTHER MOVE that the City Council instruct the Office of Wage Standards in the Bureau of Contract Administration and the Office of the City Attorney to report on resources necessary for enforcement of the Los Angeles Fair Work Week Ordinance applicable to employees of fast food businesses.


WE FURTHER MOVE that the City Council instruct the Chief Legislative Analyst, in coordination with the Bureau of Contract Administration and the Office of the City Attorney, to report with a proposed program structure and the City Attorney to report with a draft ordinance to follow, covering fast food workers, defined as non-managerial employees of fast food businesses, to create and require a robust, in-person training for fast food workers.

- The training should consist of a minimum of six hours, over the course of one day, to be completed annually and paid for by the business. The curriculum must include in-depth instruction on fast food workers' rights and how to assert those rights, including but not limited to their rights covered by minimum wage laws, the Fair Work Week Ordinance, anti-discrimination and harassment, rights regarding participation in the Fast Food Council and availability of government benefit programs.
- The training should be provided by City-approved non-profits or public organizations with knowledge and experience advocating for safe and fair working conditions for fast food workers and providing culturally and linguistically competent training, especially in the City of Los Angeles.
- The program and draft ordinance should ensure that workers have access to sufficient Paid Time Off to attend the training, including reasonable travel time.
- The report should include examples of similar policies in other jurisdictions.

WE FURTHER MOVE that the City Council instruct the Chief Legislative Analyst, in coordination with the Bureau of Contract Administration and the Office of the City Attorney, to report back with recommendations to provide employees of fast food businesses with Paid Time Off.

WE FURTHER MOVE that each of the instructions above should allow for waiver of the requirements pursuant to a *bona fide* collective bargaining agreement.

PRESENTED BY:


HUGO SOTO-MARTINEZ
Councilmember, 13th District


KATY YAROSLAVSKY
Councilmember, 5th District

SECONDED BY:



ORIGINAL