



New York City Comptroller
Scott M. Stringer

NEWS

PRESS RELEASE

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COMPTROLLER STRINGER: FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS PROMOTE WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND IMPROVE BOTTOM LINE

Calls for passage of federal, state and city ‘Right to Request’ legislation

New York, NY—Flexible work arrangements can improve productivity and job satisfaction while helping New York City maintain its status as a magnet for top talent, according to a report released today by New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer. Stringer recommended best practices for flexible work arrangements (FWAs) and highlighted lawmakers at the federal, state, and city level who have proposed legislation for the “Right to Request,” a formal mechanism for workers and employers to discuss workplace flexibility issues.

“If New York City is to remain a global economic power, government must support and encourage policies that view family and work demands as complementary, not competing interests,” Comptroller Stringer said. “Flexible work arrangements are about making sure that caregivers, parents and low-income workers have less conflict between their work and personal lives, while employers get a more dedicated and productive workforce.”

The report, “Families and Flexibility: Reshaping the Workplace for the 21st Century” highlighted the following data in support of why flexible work schedules are necessary:

- 75 percent of employees report not having enough time to spend with their children.
- 65 percent of caregivers report that they have to shift their arrival or departure time or take time off from work to provide elder care. This number will rise as the City’s senior population increases 40 percent over the next 25 years.
- Over 57 percent of low-income working families are headed by single parents, the vast majority of whom work.
- Lower-income workers are more likely to provide care to their aging parents than those in higher-income brackets.

Comptroller Stringer recommended further examination of “Right to Request” legislation that creates a formal mechanism for workers and employers to discuss workplace flexibility options, and provides specific procedures to address requests. “Right to Request” laws do not mandate

that employers provide flexible arrangements. However, by providing employees with opportunities to request flexibility without fear of reprisal, they help to break down the stigma associated with non-traditional workplace arrangements.

“It’s time for the public and private sectors to work together to reshape the workplace. ‘Right to Request’ legislation would create a process to discuss flexible arrangements. Whether it’s in finance or law, retail or health care, all industries can benefit from flexible work arrangements. New York City should be a trailblazer in creating models for the 21st century workplace,” Comptroller Stringer said.

Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney has [introduced “Right to Request” legislation](#) at the federal level with the Flexibility for Working Families Act. In New York, State Assemblywoman Nily Rozic has introduced [similar legislation](#). Today, Council Member Laurie Cumbo announced that she will introduce “Right to Request” legislation in the New York City Council.

FWAs can also help to close the persistent wage gap between women and men by making it easier for women to stay in the workforce. As detailed in a [report](#) issued by Comptroller Stringer earlier this year, the pay gap between women and men increases dramatically once women have children. While mothers are the primary or co-breadwinners in almost two-thirds of American families, women in New York City are paid 82 cents on the dollar compared to men. Studies have shown that flexible schedules can help to decrease turnover for working mothers by making it easier to respond to the dual demands of parenthood and employment.

FWAs are also good for businesses, big and small. Deloitte Consulting, a global consulting and accounting firm, reports that its flex policies save more than \$45 million per year by reducing turnover since training a new employee costs roughly 1.5 times a departing worker’s salary. The report makes several recommendations on how businesses can embrace more flexibility in the workplace:

- Establishing a mutual commitment to an honest, two-sided exchange between employee and employer to create a formal mechanism to discuss workplace flexibility options.
- Ensuring that where appropriate for a particular company, all or most employees are able to enjoy the benefits of flexible scheduling, not simply those at the top of the organization.
- Conducting an ongoing evaluation of the effects of flexible work arrangements on individual employee performance and on business profitability.

“A Better Balance applauds Comptroller Scott Stringer for recognizing the importance of fair and flexible workplaces and predictable hours for all workers across the economic spectrum. We look forward to working together to insure that workplaces in our city serve the needs of all New York City families,” said Sherry Leiwant and Dina Bakst of A Better Balance.

“In the city that never sleeps, too many working men and women are struggling to meet the oft-competing demands of their job and personal life,” said U.S. Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn). “Whether it’s to care for an elderly relative, take children to-and-from school, or best manage the work flow, flexible work arrangements are a key to meeting the 21st century’s diverse workforce needs. New York’s working families would benefit tremendously by being able to negotiate voluntary arrangements between employees and employers to change the time, amount, or location that work is conducted. Flexible work arrangements are also proven to help businesses reduce turnover and boost employee productivity. That’s why I’m so pleased that Comptroller Stringer is taking on this issue and that’s why I am pushing for passage of my Flexibility for Working Families Act, a bill I introduced to encourage employers to use more flexible work schedules. It’s a clear win-win for all.”

“As the need for workplace flexibility grows, New York should serve as a model for the ways in which employees can work effectively and efficiently,” said Assemblywoman Nily Rozic, who has drafted flextime legislation at the state level. “A right to request work flexibility and better workplace adaptability would offer employees relief without the fear of reprisal. I want to thank Comptroller Stringer, Congresswoman Maloney and Council Member Laurie Cumbo for their leadership on this important issue, and I will continue to work with them to advance the rights of working and middle class New Yorkers.”

“The work-life balance is an issue that concerns me deeply as both a legislator and an advocate for women’s issues. I want to thank Comptroller Stringer for releasing a report that highlights the need to provide both flexibility and support in the workplace for New York City women and their families. It would be an immense disservice to women, particularly those who are head of households, if we do not put every mechanism in place to ensure that they do not have to choose between their families and their livelihoods,” said Council Member Laurie A. Cumbo, Chair of Women’s Issues.

“The right to request workplace flexibility both empowers employees to ask for arrangements that accommodate their family life – and also rewards employers with increased productivity and loyalty. It is a necessity in today’s economy. I thank Comptroller Stringer for highlighting this important issue,” said Manhattan Borough President Gail A. Brewer.

“As a new mother, I have a first-hand understanding of how essential a work-life balance is,” said Council Member Julissa Ferreras, Chair of the Committee on Finance. “I am pleased to see this report reflect what so many New Yorkers already know - policies that see family and work as complementary, rather than competitive parts of a balanced life, benefit both employers and employees as well as our overall economy. I applaud Comptroller Stringer and my colleagues in government for supporting this progressive report and look forward to working with them to enhance the lives of all New Yorkers.”

“We are proud to stand in solidarity with workers in the City of New York in our commitment to fair practices,” said Council Member I. Daneek Miller, Chair of the Committee on Civil Service and Labor. “Accessibility and flexibility for working people, who are required to be responsive and reliable both in the work place and at home, is a conversation which must be had. It is a

mechanism which will serve to benefit employees and employers alike. I want to thank Comptroller Stringer for his leadership on this issue”.

“Working women’s right to make their own decisions about when and whether to have children unquestionably intersects with their ability to balance both work and family. Because women more often bear primary care-giving responsibilities, workplace flexibility is central to not just women’s economic stability, but also to their family stability. I commend Comptroller Scott M. Stringer for his leadership on this issue,” said Andrea Miller, President of NARAL Pro-Choice New York.

“When Pauline, a sheet metal journey worker asked for several days off to care for her daughter, her employer warned her that she would not have a job to come back to. This legislation will help working families not have to make a decision between earning a living and caring for their families. Comptroller Scott M. Stringer’s report highlights the struggle working families encounter every day,” said Françoise Jacobsohn, Director of Equality Works Project at Legal Momentum.

“As a parent working in the retail industry, my erratic work schedule means I don't know when I can care for my son. The right to request a more flexible schedule would allow me to plan for childcare consistently and spend time with my child. As a member of the Retail Action Project, I know this is an important step in promoting real family-sustaining jobs in retail and beyond. Thank you to Comptroller Scott M. Stringer for calling attention to the experiences of workers across the city,” said Melissa Gabriel from Retail Action Project.

“Required to always be ‘available’ to work, yet often under-scheduled with hours that vary unpredictably week to week, low-wage workers today have little say over how much and when they work. While the lowest paid workers have the least input into their schedules, we all juggle responsibilities at work and at home and need more voice in the hours we work. Comptroller Scott Stringer is helping to make the case that family-sustaining scheduling practices are vital to a healthy workplace and a thriving economy,” said Carrie Gleason, Director of the Fair Workweek Initiative at Center for Popular Democracy.

“Many working women in New York City, whether they're professionals from the business world or low-wage workers who do double shifts to put food on the table, struggle to find time for their families. The fact that women carry a disproportionate share of family responsibility while earning less money than their male counterparts compounds an already difficult balance. I thank Comptroller Stringer for his effort to shed light on the reality of thousands of women for whom the ability to come home and have dinner with their kids before putting them to bed is an exceptional privilege,” said Ann Jawin, President of the Center for Women of New York City.

“It is a business imperative for companies to recognize the power and competitive advantage of adopting flexible workplace practices. When careful thought is given to doing this correctly, the dividends are huge – for both employees and the bottom line of businesses. Ryan has seen its R.O.I. in all areas improve dramatically as a direct result of transforming our workplace culture. We commend Comptroller Stringer on his report calling attention to this issue,” said G. Brint Ryan, Chairman and CEO of Ryan Accounting.

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