

Should The U.S. Adopt a 4-Day Work Week?

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Have you ever been stuck at work on a Friday just looking at the clock waiting for it to dismiss you for your weekend? Have you ever just wanted to sleep in, and wake up to a nice morning with your kids? I want to tell you about the reasons for the U.S to adopt the four-day workweek. As being a son, whose mom works sixty plus hours a week and having the mentality that children always come first. She always wants to spend more time with her children. While this does sound great, there are some opposing viewpoints. Now, critics of the four-day workweek would argue that it causes poor customer service. Another problem with the four-day workweek would be the fact that we have a labor shortage. It is also not possible to do forty hours of work in four days. It is also hard to stay profitable if companies have to pay for the forty hours' worth of pay for people only working thirty-two hours. However, my research shows we should have a four-day work week because it can actually be more productive and efficient. This means that customer service could be better and have more quality. This extra day of the weekend could be for spending time with their families and could be used for any doctor's appointments. We should implement a four-day work week because when I am older and have a real job, I think that, if I am doing it full-time. I would want to have more time to be with my family.

Before we get into concerns, I want to inform you on the 4-day Week Global Study. According to the website with all the information about the pilot that tested the four-day week, it says that the pilot is a six-month period, with a four-day work week that has no loss in pay. They also had the one hundred, eighty, one hundred principle. Meaning that employees give one hundred percent output for eighty percent of the time, while getting one hundred percent of the pay. This study was founded by Andrew Barnes and Charlotte Lockhart. As Juliet Schor (2022) in her Ted Talk "The Case for a 4-day Work Week," informs us on where these trails take place,

which they were in Ireland, UK, New Zealand, and Australia. Also, she informs us about the main point of the pilot, it is to get as much productivity as possible in those four days by reducing time that are not productive. Such as meetings instead of them being lengthy they made them shorter, and they also reduced the number of people attending. They also moved doctor's appointments to the off day. There is another thing that I should inform you about, which is the history of why we have the five-day work week in the first place. Erin Blakemore (2023) from *national geographic* in his article "How America settled on a 5-day workweek." informs us that in 1922 Henry Ford revolutionized the work industry by his "Ford Plan," which was having his automotive factories which would work forty hours a week for five days. He also informs us why we work eight-hour days. Which was because the ten-hour day was in England, they had the factories act that transformed the twelve-to-fourteen-hour days to just ten hours a day in 1847. So, the U.S. followed suit, then what was later and really pushed the U.S. to adopt an eight-hour workday was the civil war.

One of the few concerns that critics of the four-day work week is that we couldn't support the one-day off because of the labor shortage and we wouldn't be able to pay the day off. As Brent Ornell (2021) in his article from the U.S. News, "Mandating the 4-Day Workweek Is a 'One-Size-Fits-None' Policy." states that, "The biggest challenge to imposing a 32-hour week on the U.S. economy, however, is the prevailing American labor shortage. We currently have more than 10 million open jobs with just 9 million unemployed individuals seeking work." In which according to my research having the thirty-two-hour work week would be more appealing to the new workforce and it will also keep the current workforce by having a better work life balance. Danielle Abril (2023) informs us in her article from the *Washington Post*, "Workers want a four-day week. Why hasn't it happened?" The need for better work life balance and for person care

more than ever by having people that are currently in the workforce about their opinions on the four-day work week. Such as "I feel like it would be easier to be happy ... because my life wouldn't be dominated by work," said the 21-year-old landscaper. "I would have more time to rest and recover since I have a more strenuous job." This shows a newer person to the workforce and having fewer hours of work means that she can manage her life better. Another quote from Abril (2023) that give us a notable example of needing more work life balance is, "Samuel Mora, a 45-year-old computer numerical control machinist who works more than 60 hours weekly in Whittier, Calif., said he would love a shortened week. "I can't imagine it," he said. He said he'd like to "to spend more time with my wife, maybe travel to other states."." This gives us an insight into the people who have even been in the workforce for twenty years plus. Overall, having the 4-day workweek would open time for the work life balance which would be more appealing for the people that are going to be entering the workforce. Thus, making the labor shortage issue not worse but in fact it might be the thing the U.S. needs to fix the problem.

Another concern that the critics of the four-day work week is that it would lead to poor customer service. For companies like the service industry, the reduced work week would affect the level of service provided, leading to poor customer satisfaction. According to my research, people already provide service for seven days in five days a week so we would be able to give seven days' worth of service in four with a more productive and quality. As Brian Lehrer (2023) in his article "4-Day Workweek Shows Success Abroad – Will the U.S. Follow?" states that "for example, they were delivering client services would have their days off on a rotor. In some organizations, there was a really decentralized model where maybe the head office would work Monday through Thursday." This shows us that they would have switched out days for the day off meaning that the day would be covered by the people on the other work schedule. Overall,

the four-day workweek for businesses that need full coverage could have it but by people who work 4 days a week but there would be different week structures such as Monday-Thursday, and Tuesday-Friday. That way they only work four days a week and get full coverage.

Another concern of the critics of the four-day work week is that one less day of work would cut their productivity down and they won't be able to be as profitable with the loss of work. While this sounds reasonable, according to my research, despite working one less day the companies could still produce the same amount of work in 4 days. With one less workday to revive workers it would allow them to be able to work more efficiently thus having the same amount of work done. In her Ted Talk Schor (2022) informs us about how we could fit five days' worth of work in four days and in thirty-two hours. So, she starts off by saying that "that if they can rethink where people work, they can also rethink how many days they're on the job." telling us about how we can rethink things to be more productive in the four days of work. She goes into if the four-day work week is even plausible and if we could even do it. Then she goes into the four-day global study that we have previously stated. She then talks about the benefits of the four-day work week stating "Companies can also see benefits through lower turnover and a higher-quality applicant pool. Less burnout reduces health care costs, mistakes, and poor service." and "So while they may be spending less time at work, they're not necessarily doing less work." and she goes into how they accomplish being able to get forty hours of work in thirty-two hours. By making meetings scarcer, less time, and less people attending to maximize productivity. And by switching doctor's appointments to their day off. Lastly, she goes into how people make it so that they are taking fewer breaks because they get a full day off. Overall, productivity would be way better than the normal forty-hour week. Personally, whenever I have

a break such as Christmas break it is much easier to focus on homework and hone in. So having this extra day of rest would be the rest people need to hone in for the next week.

The last concern that the critics of the four-day week is that a 4-day work week would decrease profits. As Ornell (2021) states that, “By mandating a federal 32-hour workweek, we risk aggravating that shortage by forcing employers to expand their labor forces or pay time-and-a-half rates to existing workers to meet staffing needs. The impact of that change on overall employment levels, wages, and inflation.” I say that it sounds like it would, but according to my research, people, being more productive on those 4 days, because they have an extra day of rest, could very well maintain profits even with one less day of work. As Annabelle Timsit (2023) in her article from the *Washington Post*, “A four-day workweek pilot was so successful most firms say they won't go back,” Informs us about how companies can stay profitable while only working thirty-two hours a week. Stating that “Companies' revenue "stayed broadly the same" during the six-month trial, but rose 35 percent on average when compared with a similar period from previous years.” This means it didn't cause chaos and made profits neutral or in some cases even more profitable than before. Overall, being able to have a four-day work week where productivity increases means that profits stay the same as before. Means that we can enjoy that extra day of the weekend without fault.

Now that the essay is ending, and I have looked over all the research that I have done, I would say that I would want the U.S. to adopt the four-day work week. Just looking at the pros of being able to have more of a life at home with your children for the tradeoff of more productive, profit neutral, and better-quality customer service days at work. None of this would even have been possible without the help of the non-profit 4 Day Week Global organization. They did all the research to see if it would be possible to have the four-day work week and help

companies transform and accept it worldwide. The U.S should have a 4-day work week so parents like my mom aren't stuck waiting for that clock ticking by to dismiss them to the weekend life and family at home on Friday.

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