



119th Congress
OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED
CONGRESSIONAL STAFF
ORGANIZATION



January 16, 2025

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

All Members of the 119th United States Congress

Dear Congressional Leaders and Members of Congress:

Representing House and Senate employees across the country, the Congressional Progressive Staff Association strives to build a strong, diverse workforce prepared to help Congress deliver for the American people. We write today to encourage you to consider adopting a proposal that would improve worker satisfaction, increase staff retention in Congress, and model a more sustainable approach to work on a national level. By adopting a 32-hour workweek for staff on a rotating basis, you can accomplish these goals while retaining the productivity and quality of work you expect and deserve from your team. We urge you to consider piloting the program in your own offices and encouraging your fellow Members across your conference or caucus to do the same.

As you know, serving as Congressional staff is often demanding and intensive. When Congress is in session, D.C. staff often work long hours assisting or advising the Member. Whether by drafting and analyzing legislation, meeting with impassioned advocates, communicating with constituents and the media, or smoothly administering office operations, D.C. staff are often required to manage a cascade of sensitive and challenging projects at any given time. Staffers routinely work long hours at a level of rigor that regularly leads to burnout.

At the same time, district office staff face a constant stream of work as well. Staffers who assist with constituent casework must provide support on life-changing matters in a thorough and timely way, and outreach to local officials, businesses, and the communities the Member represents cannot cease when they are in Washington. When the Member is in the District, the rigor of casework is often further compounded by having to facilitate additional meetings and events attended by the Member and staff.

The intensive nature of these roles often causes staffers to seek new positions earlier than they would in a more predictable and sustainable work environment. This is a poor outcome for both the office and the staffer. Hiring new staff members can disrupt the flow of work, alter the office culture, and deprive the team and the member of important institutional knowledge an experienced staffer takes with them. Staff members who find their pace of work unsustainable must go through the stress and uncertainty of applying, interviewing, and onboarding for a new position. With an abbreviated workweek, Congress could make longer tenures for staff the norm, thereby making the work on the Hill more effective and efficient.



While Congress is always busy, responsibilities often wax and wane based on the session calendar. Given the cyclical nature of the schedule, we propose implementing a 32-hour workweek for D.C.-based staff during district work periods and a 32-hour workweek for district-based staff while in-session. Doing so — without a reduction in pay — would allow both D.C. and distinct staff to be fully available around the clock throughout more intensive periods when the Member is in town while allowing for a more sustainable schedule when workloads are more manageable.

If implemented, offices are not likely to see a drop in overall productivity. Studies have shown that businesses that have transitioned to a 32-hour workweek have not seen a productivity decrease, while job satisfaction has skyrocketed. In a study of a four-day workweek done in the United Kingdom, the average revenue for participating companies actually *increased* by 35%. This is largely attributable to exhaustion leading to a dramatic decrease in efficiency, a trend familiar to many on the Hill. The trial led 91% of participating businesses to permanently implement the four-day workweek after the study ended.

Over 70% of workers who participated in the trial reported experiencing less burnout.¹ Working 32 hours, employees have a more substantial reprieve from work and therefore are able to complete the same tasks in less time. If implemented for Congressional staff, Members could see the same increase in job satisfaction among their teams, while maintaining or increasing their level of productivity. Several Members of Congress have already proposed legislation that would make a 32-hour workweek standard for all Americans,² doing away with the current arbitrary standard in light of the benefits to efficiency and worker health. Select Member and committee offices across both chambers implement the practice during August Recess, a further demonstration the proposal has efficacy in a governmental setting.

There are a number of ways to accomplish a 32-hour workweek in Congressional offices. If Members wish to keep their offices open five days per week, they can stagger which days employees have off so that staff are available every day. They could also elect to offer staff a five-day workweek with reduction in hours each day. This, of course, would only be the standard workweek — in the same way an office today may have a particularly busy week that requires working late or on the weekend, the same may still occasionally be necessary under this amended schedule. By setting a 32-hour workweek as standard, however, staff could plan their schedules around these time frames and have the ability to schedule their work — and, importantly, their rest and recovery days — to maximize efficiency and keep their projects on track.

We know some Members may be interested in exploring this concept but feel unable to commit to it permanently without seeing that this can work in a Congressional setting. We encourage any Member who may be hesitant to consult with their staff and engage in a six-month pilot after which the staffers know their schedule may revert back to standard working hours at the Member's discretion. Such a trial would provide ample opportunity for course correction if any unexpected pitfalls arise or should they notice any degradation in the quality or quantity of work coming out of the office.

¹ Lewis, Kyle, Will Stronge, Jack Kellam, and Lukas Kikuchi. Report. *The Results Are In: The UK's Four-Day Week Pilot*. Autonomy Research Ltd, 2023. <https://autonomy.work/portfolio/uk4dwpilotresults>

² “NEWS: Sanders Introduces Legislation to Enact a 32-Hour Workweek with No Loss in Pay.” Office of Sen. Bernie Sanders, United States Senate. March 13, 2024. <https://www.sanders.senate.gov/press-releases/news-sanders-introduces-legislation-to-enact-a-32-hour-workweek-with-no-loss-in-pay/>.



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As congressional staff, we recognize our jobs come with the honor of public service and with working conditions that surpass what many Americans experience today. We do not want a 32-hour workweek to just be another special benefit for Congressional staff: We hope that by adopting this policy, Members of Congress can help to advance the discussion around a more sustainable workweek as a national priority and model how it can work for private and public employers across the country and the world.

We hope that you will consider adopting this proposal in your office for the 119th Congress. Each Member of Congress sets their own office policies, and establishing this standard for your staff is fully within your control. By establishing a rotating 32-hour workweek for District and D.C. staff, you can help increase retention, boost productivity, and improve the quality of life for your team.

Sincerely,

The Congressional Progressive Staff Association

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CPSA was formed in 2021 to uplift the voices and experiences of progressive congressional staffers across the country. This policy initiative was approved by our membership on January 12, 2025. With over 1,500 members, CPSA is the largest staff association on Capitol Hill and is growing every day.