SHIFT PROJECT
At Harvard Kennedy School & UCB

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Dear friends and colleagues,

The Shift Project closed out 2025 with real momentum advancing our understanding of service sector work and informing labor policy. This past season, our work spanned several areas, from contributing to bipartisan Congressional action to publishing new findings in leading journals on topics including health insurance coverage, policy spillovers, and political attitudes in the workplace. We also reached an important milestone by making a decade of service sector data publicly available for the first time. This newsletter highlights our recent research releases, expanding public data resources, and the scholarly community engaged in this work.

We look forward to staying connected and continuing our work together in 2026.

Warm regards,
The Shift Project Team

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Beyond Borders: Does Firm-Level Exposure to State and Local Paid Sick Leave Mandates Lead to Intra-Firm Spillovers? *Daniel Schneider and Kristen Harknett, Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, October 23, 2025*

There is no national paid sick leave and state-level protections are incomplete. However, companies facing paid sick leave mandates in some locations may extend PSL benefits to workers in non-mandate jurisdictions. We find robust evidence of this kind of "intra-firm spillover." These findings demonstrate that multi-state employers act as conduits through which local labor standards reach workers beyond enacting jurisdictions, expanding the impact of state and local policies in an era of political gridlock on national labor standards.

JOURNAL OF
POLICY ANALYSIS
AND
MANAGEMENT

Editor-in-Chief, ERDAL TEKIN
American University

WILEY
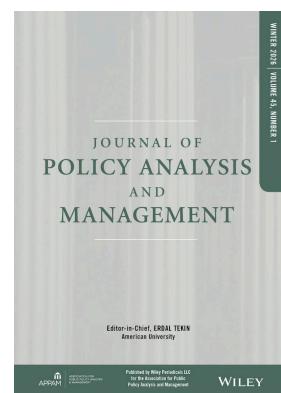
Direct Experience with Poor Working Conditions and Partisan Labor Policy Preferences. *Gregory Lyon and Daniel Schneider, Public Opinion Quarterly, November 19, 2025*

Support for unions in the US is growing, but there is a deep partisan divide. Drawing on a sample of hourly service-sector workers, we find that the partisan gap in union support disappears among workers exposed to the most precarious working conditions. In these "bad jobs," Republican and Democratic workers' views converge, with both groups embracing pro-union labor policy
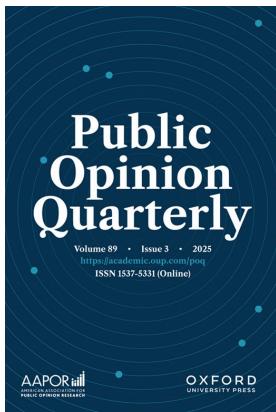
preferences. This finding reveals the meaningful role of personal workplace experience as a counterweight to partisan polarization on policy attitudes.

[Employer-Sponsored Health Insurance for Workers in the Hourly Service Sector.](#) *Gabriella Aboulafia and Daniel Schneider, JAMA Health Forum, November 7, 2025*

The ACA established "shared responsibility" for the provision of health care for large employers. However, key exemptions undermine this intent. We show that more than half (54%) of workers are excluded from employer-sponsored insurance through at least one mechanism: part-time status (30%), employment at franchised firms (26%), or short tenure (17%). Workers in these exempt categories are substantially less likely to be offered health insurance.

Do you want to learn more about a specific topic or read more from a specific Shift contributor? Check out [our publication page](#), which allows you to filter more than 70 articles and research briefs by research area and author.

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AMAZON DELIVERY DRIVERS REPORT

[In the first large-scale comparison of working conditions at Amazon, UPS, and FedEx](#), Daniel Schneider, David Weil, Julie Su, and Kevin Bruey find that Amazon's subcontracting model creates a two-tier delivery workforce. Amazon drivers earn $19/hour compared to $35/hour for unionized UPS drivers, face greater economic hardship, and work under intense technological surveillance without the job security or benefits that unionized drivers receive. The findings generated widespread media coverage and prompted bipartisan Congressional scrutiny, with Senators Warren and Hawley citing Shift data on Amazon's unstable scheduling practices in a letter to Jeff Bezos.

[Senators pressure Jeff Bezos over Amazon](#)

[The unraveling of workplace protections for delivery](#)

[Amazon promises 'big deals' — but not for delivery workers](#)

EVENTS

Gonçalo Costa, Danny Schneider, and David Weil presented their research on labor violations at the MIT Institute for Work and Employment Research Seminar on October 28, 2025. Their presentation highlighted new evidence regarding worker complaints related to labor standards.

Kristen Harknett presented novel data from Shift's most recent wave of data collection concerning education and training opportunities for service sector workers to participants of the The Futures Project on Education and Learning for Longer Lives, a joint initiative of the Stanford Center on Longevity and the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (CASBS).

New Shift Project research was presented at the 47th Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management (APPAM) Annual Fall Research Conference. Shift project collaborator Julia Goodman presented research on working while sick in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, and Kess Ballentine presented on the challenges of punitive workplace policies for public health goals. In addition, Daniel Schneider presented research on social support and precarious scheduling.
Click below to learn more about each presentation:

"Trends in Working While Sick in the Aftermath of the COVID-19 Pandemic" Julia Goodman, Daniel Schneider, and Kristen Harknett

"Paid Sick Leave, Points, and Presenteeism: The Challenge of Punitive Workplace Policies for Public Health Goals" Meredith Slopen, Kess Ballentine, Kristen Harknett, and Daniel Schneider

"The Double Bind of Precarious Work: Creating Need and Undermining Support" Tyler Woods, Kristen Harknett, and Daniel Schenider

DATA RESOURCES

We're thrilled to share an exciting milestone: **the Shift Project's data is now publicly available to researchers!** We have launched the first release of our main cross-sectional dataset including responses from hourly workers at over 150 of the largest U.S. retail, food service, grocery, delivery, and hospitality companies collected since 2016. Additionally, we've unveiled a comprehensive new Documentation page on our website featuring an interactive codebook, survey questionnaires, and detailed methodology information.

Explore the Shift Project Data

Visit our Documentation page

MONTHLY MEETING SPOTLIGHT

[Lisa Kresge](), Senior Researcher at the UC Berkeley Labor Center, shared findings from her analysis of a [new inventory of over 500 collective bargaining agreements](), documenting how unions across industries are negotiating over artificial intelligence and digital workplace technologies.

[Hyojin Cho](), Assistant Professor at the School of Social Work at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, presented research [estimating the effects of FWW laws in Chicago, NYC, and Seattle]() on workers' experiences of scheduling practices as well as variation by provision, administrative rules, and industry.

[Henri Jackson](), predoctoral fellow with the Shift Project, compared organizational responses to state-mandated minimum wage increases versus voluntary corporate wage programs. The research finds that while both approaches increase wages without reducing hours or benefits, corporate programs uniquely increase speed-monitoring technologies.

OPEN POSITIONS

We're recruiting up to three full-time predoctoral research fellows to join our team starting in fall 2026. Fellows will work closely with our researchers on all aspects of the project, from survey data collection from retail and food-service workers to data analysis and co-authoring research reports and academic papers. It's a fantastic opportunity for aspiring scholars to gain hands-on research experience at the intersection of labor policy and worker wellbeing. Interested? The application deadline is January 15th, 2026.

Apply Now

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