**TOPIC: This House would reduce the work week to 4 days**

**PRO**

**1 PRO: Case and Contentions** (2nd and 3rd Pro speakers defend these arguments)

**My partners and I support the following topic: This House would reduce the work week to 4 days.**

**Oxford Languages Dictionary defines “work week” as:** the total number of hours or days worked in a week

**Contention 1: People Are Over-Worked Now**

**The current standard work week leaves people exhausted**

* According to Mercer’s 2022 Global Talent Trends Study, 81% of employees are worried about burning out this year due to being over-worked. Most people work 40 hour weeks which consists of 5 days of 8 hour long work shifts – most commonly Monday through Friday from 9am in the morning to 5pm in the evening.
* People are exhausted from this work schedule. Forbes magazine argues that everyday people have to get to their work place in often times long travel times, and once you egt home from work its late and you’re exhausted. People have just enough time for dinner, a little relaxing time, then going to bed to prepare for another day of the same routine.

**Reducing the work week by a day will make the work week easier**

* Time Magazine has reported that studies on the benefits of a 4 day work week have found that shortening the work week results in improvements to employees health. It reduces their anxiety and stress about work, and helps them get better sleep and rest so they perform at their jobs better.
* As the saying goes, less is more. Working less days a week will make working easier for employees. That means people will have better attitudes, higher energy, and be more productive than they are currently.

**Being exhausted and demanded too much of results in poor work performance**

* A study from Harvard Business review finds that working long hours is more likely to lead to tired employees. People are more likely to make mistakes when they are tired, which means that over-worked employees don’t do as good at their jobs as people who are more rested.
* Additionally, Indeed reports that cutting down to only four days per week can increase productivity. Employees know they need to get the work done in one less day, so they get more done each day to compensate. They learn to prioritize tasks, cutting out the time-wasters, so they're more efficient.

**Contention 2: Free Time**

**The current standard work week leaves people with little free time**

* Vox Magazine argues that the standard 5 day work week is dead. People believe they are eft with too little free time for how much they do for their jobs. Now, people only have 2 days off of work a week but work for 5 days, often in a row.
* The most important thing for people to enjoy their lives is having access to free time without worrying about money. People feel so exhausted from their jobs now because they don’t have enough free time to recharge and enjoy their non-work lives.

**Reducing the work week to 4 days gives people 3 days off a week instead of 2**

* Reducing the standard work week to 4 days means that people would have one extra day off a week. This could mean people work Monday through Thursday, then be off of work Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.
* Change Recruitment Group argues that the biggest benefit to a 4 day work week is that employees will get three days of rest a week, which is 50% more than what most workers have now.

**More free time results in happier and better rested employees**

* A report from the Brookings Institute argues that currently, most workers experience a “time squeeze” where they work so much and get too little free time. This has developed into issues of tired employees, and worse productivity.
* The University of Oxford conducted a report and found that happy workers are 13% more productive compared to their unhappy counterparts. That means that giving workers more free time to increase their happiness, will increase business productivity as well.

**2 PRO: Responses to CON Arguments**

Answering Productivity:

* According to University of California Berkley, well-rested employees are more productive than their over worked counterparts. Over-worked employees feel burnout, resulting in slower work and often make more mistakes that require extra time that need to be fixed.
* Even if one day is reduced from the work week, employees will be more productive in a 4 day work week than they are now in a 5 day work week. That means there would be no offset effect in productivity by reducing the work week by a day.

Answering Costs Businesses More Money:

* Jefferson Bank reports that a 4 day work week could actually save employers money. A 4 day work week can reduce variable expenses and overhead costs, such as utilities like electricity, or food for lunches. Businesses would also have the discretion to pay people a day’s wages less in exchange for a reduced work week.
* Even if reducing the work week to 4 days would artificially increase the value of workers time, it still wouldn’t result in employers paying their workers more than they are now. It would still be the same amount of money as now, just with one less day they show up. But since productivity will be improved, that doesn’t hurt employers.

**CON**

**1 CON: Case and Contentions** (2nd and 3rd Con speakers defend these arguments)

**My partners and I reject the topic: This House would reduce the work week to 4 days.**

**Contention 1: Decreases Productivity**

**The current work week allows businesses to be productive 5 days of the week**

* The current work week schedule has people working 5 days a week for 8 hours a day. That means businesses get 40 hours of productivity out of their employees per week.
* According to Daniel Hamermesh, an economist at the University of Texas, reducing the work week to 4 days can look two different ways: either people still have to work 40 hours but in 4 days instead of 5 resulting in longer work days, or work less hours a week but the same amount of hours per day. In either scenario, businesses lose out on the productivity of its employees.

**Reducing the work week takes away a business’s productivity potential**

* PBS reports that a reduced work week could work in a few ways. If people are still expected to work 40 hour weeks but in 4 days instead of 5, that means people would be working 10 hour days instead of 8. They warn that people get tired after working that long in a single day, and will be less productive in the 9th and 10th hours of their shift.
* If a reduced work week also reduces the amount of hours people work per week, that means employees get less time from their employees to actually do their job and be productive for the company. As a result, companies might have to hire more employees to make up the productivity loss.

**Productivity is essential for the success of a business and its ability to pay its workers good wages**

* According to Harvard Business Review, productivity is important for businesses to produce the same amount of goods and services or more with the constant amount of workforce. This results in being more competitive than other businesses, and results in more profits.
* Productivity and profits benefit employees too – successful businesses are able to offer their employees higher wages, and better benefits such as longer vacation times which make employees happier.

**Contention 2: Costs Businesses More Money**

**The current work week means people are paid salaries with the expectation of 5 days of work a week**

* According to Change Recruitment Group, most people are paid an annual salary. Such as $60,000 a year, which comes with the expectation that people work forty hours a week. If reducing the work week results in less hours in the work week, companies would be paying the same salaries for less time worked by employees.
* Salaries are like contracts – after employment has been accepted by a workers, companies can’t just change the amount. So if the work week was reduced to 4 days and less than 40 hours a week, companies wouldn’t be able to adjust their employees salaries.

**Reducing the work week artificially increases workers value comparatively to their time**

* If the work week was reduced to four days and less hours than 40, this would result in the cost per employee increasing because employees’ time would be worth more per hour if the work week was reduced.
* In the UK for example, they experimented with a 4 day work week. The pilot project ran between June and December 2022 and was based on the 100-80-100 model: this means workers got 100% pay for working 80% of their previous hours in exchange for a commitment to maintain 100% productivity. In this experiment, every UK worker basically got a raise because they made the same amount of money for less hours.

**In result, businesses will be paying more for labor from workers which has bad consequences**

* Sweden, who implemented a 6 hour work day which decreased the total hours in a work week, ended up paying 22% more in labor costs because they had to pay overtime to employees to work beyond their typical 6 hour days to get all the necessary work done in Sweden’s cities like road repairs. Overtime pay is 1.5 times what employees usually make, and they only get this extra pay if they work beyond the standard work week hours.
* This example shows that decreasing the work week to 4 days will result in companies spending more money to pay their employees, even if they get less work out of them.

**2 CON: Responses to PRO Arguments**

Answering People are Over-Worked Now:

* A 4 day work week could still over-work people as well if the work week total hours stays 40 a week. Ina 4 day work week, that would mean people would have to work 10 hour long days instead of their normal 8. This would make people feel more overworked every day for four days in a row.
* As a result, Harvard Business Review argues that increasing daily hours of work backfires for most people, even if it means an extra day off in a week.

Answering Free Time:

* According to ZDNet there are other ways of giving employees more free time without reducing the work week to 4 days. For example, remote work gives employees more free time because they don’t have to take time out of their day to commute to and back from work.
* Most jobs give employees a good amount of free time now. Most salaried jobs give employees a certain amount of vacation and sick days a year, and increase them the longer you work at the job. Employees get to choose when they want to use free time.