

Overtime Pay Legislation Would Help Workers

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<http://newiprogressive.com/images/stories/S5/union-workers-s5.jpg>



Bill would expand overtime pay to 80,000 middle class workers.

MADISON - State Senator **Dave Hansen** (D-Green Bay) and State Representative **Cory Mason**

(D-Racine) announced today that they have introduced legislation that updates Wisconsin's overtime pay law to bring it in line with existing salaries and the current cost of living. The legislation was first introduced in 2015 by Senator Julie Lassa and Representative Andy Jorgenson.

Wisconsin's middle class has shrunk faster than any other state in the nation between 2000 and 2013. In just 13 years real median household incomes fell almost \$9,000 or 15%. A Gallup poll found that salaried Americans are working an average of 47 hours a week, with 18 percent working more than 60 hours per week.



“Under this Governor and Republican leadership, it is the wealthy who are making out. That’s because he and his followers have opposed passing any laws that will help increase workers’ pay whether they are blue collar or white collar workers,” **said Hansen**. “Struggling families can’t get ahead if they keep falling behind—and in Wisconsin they have not only fallen behind, Governor Walker doesn’t even see them in his rearview mirror.”

In 1975, more than 65% of salaried workers earned time-and-a-half pay for every hour they worked over 40 hours a week. By 2013, only 11 percent of salaried workers qualified for overtime pay.



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“Setting Wisconsin’s threshold at a realistic administrative salary of \$970/week or \$50,440 a year, would more than 80,000 more Wisconsin workers will be eligible for overtime and that Wisconsin workers would be paid fairly for the hours they work and help them regain the purchasing power their parents had 40 years ago,” **Mason said.**

Wisconsin’s threshold has not been updated since 1977, meaning that under current state law anyone making more than \$9,000 a year would be considered “white collar” and ineligible for the overtime pay they deserve. Federal law which hasn’t been adjusted in over ten years, denying overtime to administrative workers who make more than \$21,840 a year – a figure that’s below the poverty level for a family of four.

“The Governor and Republicans oppose strengthening equal pay enforcement, increasing the minimum wage, and updating our overtime pay law. As a result, their opposition only serves to undermine the people who do the real work in this state while corporations and the rich get richer,” Hansen said.

Legislative writer Jay Wadd contributed this story.