

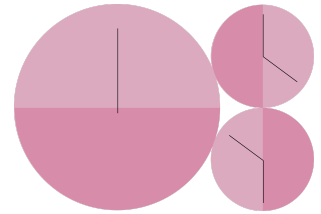
# The Good Life Fact Sheet

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## Reclaiming Time for What Matters

The average middle-class American couple with children works a combined [600 paid hours](#) a year more today than they did in 1975. This means that in the last 50 years, American families have essentially added over four months of paid work a year to their calendars without any similarly significant shift in the kind of support that families receive.

Those hours have to come from somewhere. But without affordable care, guaranteed paid leave, workable school schedules, or shorter commutes, families are left to make up the difference on their own. No wonder a full life, rich with family and community, can feel out of reach. Who has the time?



Our time agenda targets this human outcome: giving Americans the time they have needed for decades, the time that lets all of us care for our loved ones and communities and make meaning in our lives.

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## Policies to Get the Job Done

- **Paid Leave.** The US is a deep outlier in its lack of paid leave. After injury, illness, disability, or the birth of a child, too few can afford to take the time they need.
  - An equitably designed universal public option for paid leave, paired with universal childcare, would give Americans the time they need to care for loved ones and themselves.
- **Shorter Workweeks.** As fears about AI-induced job displacement increase, a shorter workweek should be on the table. Four-day workweeks are backed by real-world experiments showing they can preserve and even increase productivity.
  - Policymakers can lay the foundation for a shorter workweek by shifting the point at which overtime kicks in and then broadening and strengthening overtime laws.
  - Long-term, policymakers should use public options and the tax code to decouple benefits from employment.
  - This can create more shared opportunities for meaningful work while leaving us with more time to do the things we love outside of work.

- **Scheduling.** The days of finding a job with a consistent and steady schedule no longer exist for millions of workers in the US, particularly those in the service sector. Workers deserve control over their time, so they can attend a parent-teacher conference or see friends without worrying about a last-minute shift change.
  - Congress should pass federal fair scheduling legislation to give employees reasonable notice and certainty about work.
  - Empowering workers to organize and build countervailing power can also ensure they have a voice in their schedules.
  
- **The Annoyance Economy.** Each year, Americans lose at least [\\$165 billion](#) to the time-consuming annoyances of daily life: time on the phone with customer service, time dealing with junk fees and scams, time applying for student loans or Medicaid.
  - Federal agencies should use their enforcement powers to take on corporate abuses that waste consumers' time and money.
  - Policymakers should design public options to minimize paperwork, make participation easy, and reduce the role of middlemen.
  
- **Leisure, Community, and Democratic Practice.** A serious time agenda would give people more room in their days. Building new public spaces and community institutions can help them spend that time meaningfully, while exercising real agency.
  - Public leisure infrastructure, like parks, pools, and libraries, can build community while providing new physical spaces for spending free time.
  - A nationwide service program could put young people to work on those projects, fostering national community.
  - By facilitating democratic engagement, including through paid civic leave, policymakers can ensure that they are truly governing with the people.

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