



# Changing Times News

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Changing Times News is the TUC's online bulletin on work-life balance issues. Visit the website at <http://www.tuc.org.uk/changingtimes>

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## Equality is crucial to unlocking talent

The pursuit of equality is an essential component of any response to the economic downturn, the TUC has said. General secretary Brendan Barber told the TUC's equality reps conference on 9 February the case for equality was 'greater than ever' in the recession and underlined how it can be achieved in workplaces across the UK by expanding the new network of equality reps. He said those who argued equality in a recession was "a luxury we somehow cannot afford... are wrong on every count. When times are tough, the need to encourage fair chances, to unlock the talents of everyone in our society, to tackle the gross inequality that lies at the heart of so many of our problems, is greater than ever." He added: "Our new network of equality reps is already helping to deliver equality in workplaces across the UK. By raising awareness on equality issues, bargaining with employers and advising colleagues whose needs are most acute, union reps are making a real difference to people's lives." Mr Barber told the London conference: "From flexible working requests to childcare advice and mentoring, equality reps are on hand

to offer advice that is tailored to what workers need to thrive in their jobs,” adding the impact of these reps would be greater still if they were given statutory rights, like those already in place for trade union safety and learning reps. Minister for women and equality Harriet Harman told delegates: “Equality and an absence of discrimination are the hallmarks of a modern society, as well as important for the economy so that it can draw on the talents of all.” She added: “Until now, the labour market has been valuing the wrong things. That's evident from the millions paid in bonuses to those who have failed. But we are now turning away from risk-taking and greed, and recognising qualities and experience that women bring to the workplace. There is a pressure for change in the workplace, and equality reps can be a catalyst for this change.”

- [TUC news release](#). [Brendan Barber's speech in full](#). [Government Equalities Office news release](#).

**Recession action must help women**

The recession will hit women harder than any previous downturn, according to a TUC briefing. ‘Women and recession’ shows that women will suffer more because this recession is hitting service as well as manufacturing sector jobs, more women are in work and more households now depend solely or primarily on a woman's wage. But importantly the report does not argue that more women will lose their jobs than men – the TUC believe that it is important to recognise that women will experience particular impacts from recession, while also understanding that more men than women will lose their jobs in this downturn. The union body says the government response to the recession must recognise the need for measures to help women back to work – for example, work-life balance imperatives like flexible working and access to childcare. TUC’s analysis of official statistics, using data published in December, shows in recent months the rate at which women have been losing their jobs has increased at the same speed as the male unemployment rate. This contrasts with the start of the downturn when the rate at which men

were losing their jobs was increasing faster. From January - September 2008 the female redundancy rate increased by 2.3 percentage points, almost double the rate of male increase (1.2 percentage points). TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: “This is going to be an equal opportunities recession. Job losses in sectors where men predominate such as manufacturing and construction are now being balanced by job losses in retail and hospitality where more women than men work. But job losses among men are still more likely to hit the headlines as women tend to work in smaller workplaces where redundancies go unnoticed by the media.” He added “with so many households absolutely dependent on women's wages the government must ensure that women benefit in full from programmes to help those facing redundancy and the long term unemployed.” The TUC says women may face particular barriers to finding new jobs. Women with childcare responsibilities may have chosen particular part-time or flexible employment opportunities as a means to balance paid and unpaid work. This means if many women are going to get back into work, it is more important than ever they have access to affordable childcare and employers increase the opportunities for flexible working.

- [TUC news release](#) and Women and recession report [[pdf](#)]. [TUC TouUChstone blog](#) (various posts highlighting some of the misreporting that the report received). [Sunday Times](#). [The Observer](#). [Age Concern news release](#).
- Resources: TUC [workSMART redundancy advice pages](#). Flexible working in a recession, Working Families [[pdf](#)].

**TUC warning on unpaid overtime**

More than five million people worked unpaid overtime in 2008, bringing its total value across the UK to a record £26.9 billion, according to an analysis of official statistics published by the TUC. The union body warned a recent trend to shorter hours has been reversed and says the economic downturn could increase the pressure to work for free. TUC calculated that 5.24

million people worked unpaid overtime in 2008 - the highest number since records began in 1992. The previous record was five million in 2001. Employees who work unpaid would receive an extra £5,139 a year if they were paid for the additional hours they are putting in, the TUC calculated. The average amount of unpaid overtime is seven hours and six minutes - the same amount as the preceding year. TUC's figures show if everyone who works unpaid overtime did all their unpaid work at the start of the year, the first day they would get paid would be Friday 27 February. The TUC traditionally declares this 'Work Your Proper Hours Day' and makes a light-hearted call for staff to work their proper hours for at least one day a year and for employers to thank their staff for regularly putting in the extra hours at work. Commenting on the 8 January launch of the new figures, TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "After years of progress, the numbers doing unpaid overtime has increased for the second year in a row. This is disappointing. But while some of this is due to the long hours culture that still dogs too many British workplaces, the recession will now be making many people scared of losing their job in the year ahead and joining the ever-growing dole queue. Inevitably people will be putting in extra hours if they think it can help protect against redundancy or keep their employer in business." He added: "This is not the year therefore for our usual light-hearted 'Work Your Proper Hours Day'. But this does not mean people should ignore excessive working. Friday 27 February should still be used to think through working hours. Long hours are bad for people's health, and employers should never forget that each extra hour worked makes people less productive once they are over a sensible working week. The recession should instead provide a spur to make workplaces more productive, and for managers to get staff to work together, not compete for who can stay the latest."

- [TUC news release](#). [BBC News Online](#).
- [Work Your Proper Hours Day, Friday 27 February 2009](#).

### Unions welcome EU working time action

Trade unions have welcomed the December

2008 decisive vote by the European Parliament to end the UK's opt-out from Europe's 48 hour average working week.

TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said members of the European Parliament had "courageously defied the abusers and the slave-drivers over the loss of the 'right' to work people till they drop." He welcomed a move that would mean "families will get their mums and dads back. Now we need to tackle the low pay and poor productivity that were kept alive by long hours working. No one should have to work more than 48 hours a week all year round to put food on the table or a roof over their heads." To demonstrate the consequences of excessive working hours, GMB published a dossier of recent public and workplace deaths linked to overwork, including the Clapham Junction rail crash in which 35 died, road traffic fatalities related to excessive work driving hours and suicides related to over work. GMB general secretary Paul Kenny said this was a "sad list of some of our fellow UK citizens who were killed because of excessive working hours."

Construction union UCATT said the current system, under which British workers have the right to sign away the requirement that they should not on average work in excess of 48 hours per week, led to many workers being coerced by management into signing the opt-out. The European Parliament and the Council of Ministers are now discussing the way forward on the working hours issue. A decision is expected early this year, although it will be three years before any changes take effect. A December 2008 report from the TUC concluded ending the UK's opt-out from Europe's 48 hour average working week would cause business little difficulty ([CTN102](#)).

- [TUC news release](#). [GMB news release and dossier](#). [UCATT news release](#). [PCS news release](#).
- Ending the opt-outs from the 48 hour week - Easy steps to decent working time, TUC, December 2008 [[pdf](#)].

### PCS victory in EU sick leave case

A union-backed European legal challenge has

established employees on long-term sick leave are entitled on their return to work to take any holiday they accrued. The January European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruling also says if workers are fired or leave a firm, they must receive holiday pay equivalent to the time they were unable to take while ill. The ruling does not mean that staff away on long-term illness automatically benefit from annual paid leave while absent from work, but does require employers to give staff a reasonable chance to take holiday they accrued while off sick. The case was brought by five PCS members at Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) in the UK and a worker from Deutsche Rentenversicherung Bund in Germany. It was based on a stipulation of the European Working Time Directive, which says workers have a "right to a minimum period of paid annual leave." The ECJ ruling said: "A worker does not lose his right to paid annual leave which he has been unable to exercise because of sickness. He must be compensated for his annual leave not taken." Employers' organisation the CBI called the decision "a real blow." The UK portion of the case was referred to the ECJ by the House of Lords. It is anticipated the case, which involves PCS members at HMRC, will return to the Lords later this year, to consider the effect of the judgment and to decide whether a complaint about unpaid annual leave can be brought as a claim for deduction from wages.

- [European Commission news release](#) and full decision, [Judgment of the Court of Justice in Joined Cases C-350/06 and C-520/06, ECJ, 20 January 2009](#). [BBC News Online](#). [Personnel Today](#).

## OTHER NEWS

### **Employer lobby dislikes equality moves**

A top employers' organisation has attacked what it describes as an "onslaught" of business and employment legislation. The Institute of Directors (IoD) said forthcoming measures, including the Single Equality Bill and the

extension to flexible working due to take effect in April, are "costly and ill-judged". Top of its list are Time to Train and business rate supplements, followed by the equality bill and the new rights to flexible working. IoD says it "does not accept" the government argument – an argument also supported by unions, the equality watchdog and equal rights campaigns - that the proposals have benefits which will offset the costs. IoD director general Miles Templeman commented: "Not long ago, the government was talking about a temporary freeze on new regulation as a means of helping businesses through these incredibly difficult times. However, despite the business friendly rhetoric, the government's own figures indicate that ministers are in regulatory overdrive." He added: "The introduction of £1billion of extra employment entitlements, pay audits and business rate supplements at a time of acute difficulties for business is a massive error." He called on the government to rethink the measures. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) has called on the government to publicise the business case for equal pay reviews. "There are clear business benefits to conducting equal pay reviews, but there is a lack of understanding among employers as to what those benefits are," said Charles Cotton, reward adviser at the CIPD.

- [IoD news release](#). [CIPD news release](#). [Personnel Today](#).

### **Childcare fees 'continue to rise'**

Many parents in Britain are paying in excess of £8,000 a year for a full-time nursery place, a charity has said. A survey by the Daycare Trust found the yearly cost of a typical nursery place for a child under two was £8,684 in England, £8,216 in Scotland and £7,592 in Wales. The trust said for England this was a five per cent increase on the previous 12 months, compared to an inflation rate of 3.1 per cent. The figures are derived from a survey of 136 Family Information Services (FIS) in England, Scotland and Wales, based on 50 hours a week in a nursery over 52 weeks. In total, 69 per cent of FISs said parents had reported a lack of childcare in their area

over the past year and 59 per cent of FISS reported insufficient childcare in their area for over 12s. Also, 56 per cent reported insufficient childcare for disabled children and children with special education needs. Daycare Trust joint chief executive Emma Knights said: “It is crucial that parents claim all the help they are entitled to, and that the government increase the free childcare entitlement to include all two-year-olds. The current review of tax credits should increase the maximum proportion of childcare costs the poorest parents can claim from 80 per cent to 100 per cent.” Children's minister Beverley Hughes disputed the charity's claims. In a letter to the Daycare Trust, she said the survey was based on parents requiring 50 hours of childcare all year round for under-fives, which was “more than most parents take up or want.” She added that the survey did not acknowledge the tax credit system for working parents or childcare vouchers offered through employers. The early years grants, available for children in the term after their third birthday, was also ignored, she said.

- [Daycare Trust news release. BBC News Online.](#)

### New childcare reforms unveiled

The government has announced proposals designed to improve the quality of childcare in England and to increase the supply to the country's most deprived children. Measures would include offering free childcare places for 15 per cent of the most disadvantaged two-year-olds across the country. There could also be a new legal requirement that every carer looking after children is qualified to A-level or equivalent standard. Announcing the plan, children's minister Beverley Hughes said: “Working families now have access to a wide range of childcare support from free provision for all three- and four-year-olds and the most disadvantaged two-year-olds and extended parental leave, to Sure Start Children's Centres and a greater financial support to parents through tax credits and Employer Supported Childcare vouchers. We want to build on this

progress and do more to support and value parents. We know that for those who can, parental employment remains the best way out of poverty. With flexible, affordable childcare parents will be able to stay in, or get into employment so we need to ensure that childcare and early learning is a universal public service of the highest standard.”

- [DCSF news release.](#) Next steps for early learning and childcare – Building on the 10-Year strategy, Cabinet Office [[pdf](#)]. [Daycare Trust news release. The Guardian.](#)

### 'Mummy bonds' to aid work return

Parents who take long career breaks to look after their children are to be eligible for £500 in training grants to help them back into work. The grants, dubbed “mummy bonds”, will be made to every person who has taken more than five years off work to care for a child or sick relative. The government's intention is to help parents retrain after a spell out of the workforce and to ensure that those who have sacrificed some of their career to caring duties do not slip down the career ladder. Ministers say they want to reward people - mostly women - for the contribution their caring duties have made to society and make sure they are not disadvantaged when they return to work. The Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) plan will be piloted to test the best way to allocate the grants. It is a feature of the New Opportunities White Paper, released on 13 January, which sets out the Government's strategy for improving social mobility. The money will be paid into a skills account rather than in cash and may be used for IT courses, sales and marketing or project and financial training. The initiative comes in response to widespread concerns that women's earnings and careers are damaged after having children.

- [DIUS news release](#) and [New Opportunities webpages and White Paper. The Times. The Guardian.](#)

### Working parents grapple with family roles

One in four parents has reduced their working life to spend more time with their family, according to government research. The study also charts the rise of “relay parenting” where mums and dads parent in shifts to fit around their jobs. Families are under stress from the pressures of juggling work and home life, but even so, parents who work are more likely to stay together because financial problems are one of the biggest strains a relationship can suffer, according to the wide-ranging Cabinet Office study, which documents the changing nature of families. The document spells out the growing impact of working lives on families. Around 25 per cent of adults aged 30 to 59 have downshifted their careers over the last 10 years by quitting their jobs, reducing their hours or changing their career path. A third said spending more time with their family was the primary reason. Nearly 20 per cent said the motivation was looking for a more fulfilling job. While mothers and fathers now spend more “quality” time with their children, in particular taking part in educational activities, there is much less “couple time” for parents, the study found.

- [DCSF news release. Families in Britain: an evidence paper](#), Cabinet Office [[pdf](#)]. [The Guardian](#).

### Pregnant women benefit from time off

Proper work breaks before and after giving birth benefit women and their babies, two new research papers suggest. Women who stop working at least a month before their babies are due are four times less likely to have a caesarean delivery because they are less tired and anxious, a study of 400 women led by Dr Sylvia Guendelman from the University of California found. The findings appear to support those of earlier research, the team said. Previous studies have shown that women who get less than six hours' sleep a night are more likely to choose or accept instructions to have a caesarean, while those who experience “occupational strain” report higher levels of swollen hands and legs

and pre-eclampsia, which often leads to surgical intervention. A second study led by Dr Guendelman found that women who took less than six weeks off work after giving birth were four times more likely to be unsuccessful in establishing a breastfeeding routine, while those who took less than 12 weeks off were twice as likely as other mothers to fail. More than four in five (82 per cent) of the 770 women in the study had a breastfeeding routine, but 23 per cent stopped in the month before returning to work, 29 per cent during the first month after returning and another 20 per cent in the second month.

- Sylvia Guendelman and others. Maternity leave in the ninth month of pregnancy and birth outcomes among working women, *Women’s Health Issues*, volume 19, issue 1, Pages 30-37, January 2009 [[abstract](#)].  
Sylvia Guendelman and others. Juggling work and breastfeeding: Effects of maternity leave and occupational characteristics, *Pediatrics*, volume 123: pages e38-e46, January 2009 [[abstract](#)]. [Sydney Morning Herald](#).

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Gender challenge

A report on gender and employment from an independent advisory body says a government campaign should be launched to challenge people's assumptions about gender roles in the workforce, while employers should try to attract more female applicants to non-traditional jobs. The National Skills Forum report also blames soaps, dramas and factual programmes for perpetuating the stereotyping of women at work, and says they should show women working in non-traditional jobs. [National Skills Forum news release](#) and report, Closing the gender skills gap [[pdf](#)]. [The Guardian](#).

### Lowered Grandcarers

Almost half (48 per cent) of all grandparents provide about 20 hours a week childcare, saving parents of under-fives an estimated £2.4bn a year in childminding costs, according to a survey by Yours magazine. “Today's young families would struggle even more to pay their mortgage and bills if the grandparents didn't help out with free childcare,” the study said. [Yours magazine](#).

**Tory bill**

Flexible working rights should be extended to parents of children who are aged 18 and under, according to a Tory peer. Baroness Morris of Bolton included the proposal in her Equal Pay and Flexible Working Bill, an initiative that also calls for employers that pay women less for the same work as men to be forced to carry out equal pay audits. [Personnel Today](#).

**Bully Sunday**

Around 100 conductors working out of London Midland depots at Bletchley, Northampton and Watford Junction are being balloted for strike action over attempts to bully staff into working Sundays. The move by the RMT members follows the company's refusal to honour long-standing agreements that former Silverlink staff can opt out of working on Sundays and should receive enhanced payments for working into rest days. [RMT news release](#).

**Age concern**

Ninety per cent of employees think it is more difficult for older members of staff to find a new job than their younger colleagues, according to a study from ICM commissioned by Age Concern. Gordon Lishman, director general of Age Concern, said: “Older workers are facing a double whammy of faster rises in unemployment levels than other age groups [as well as] forced retirement,” adding that the research showed over-50s are being hit hard in the current slowdown. [Age Concern](#). [Yours magazine](#).

**Staff sharing**

Companies have to get creative to beat the recession, the TUC has said. Welcoming a new

‘Staffshare’ organisation, TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: “Staffshare is part of a new approach that is needed if we are to avoid the waste of talent and human tragedies that occur if companies rush prematurely into redundancies when conditions start to get tough.” [Staffshare](#).

**Changing relationships**

A report from The Work Foundation demonstrates the importance of workplace relationships to job satisfaction and highlights the role that technologies can play in creating and maintaining these links. The January 2009 publication says both old and new technologies can help organisations create the kind of culture that people prefer and the relationships that can help to sustain innovation and prosperity in a 21st century economy. [Changing relationships at work \[pdf\]](#).

**Poor reward**

A survey of 500 employers by Kingston University Business School has found 46 per cent of organisations did not give extra money or praise to employees that worked late or above their normal working hours. The study for communications giant T-Mobile found more than half (59 per cent) of employers did not consider late working in the office as an indication of how hard they worked. [T-Mobile news release](#). [Personnel Today](#).

**Healthy statistics**

UK workers are far less likely to take sick leave than their European counterparts, pipped only by Turkey. With sickness absence averaging just 5.5 days per year, UK workers take far less time off than the European average of 7.4 days, according to the ‘Pan-European health and benefits report’ by human resources consultancy Mercer, which surveyed nearly 800 companies across 24 European countries. [Mercer survey summary](#). [Personnel Today](#).

### **Weathering well**

Embracing flexible working could help employers avoid the kind of disruption caused by freezing weather and winter viruses. Stephen Beynon, managing director of communications firm NTL Telewest Business, said: “Flexible working no longer conjures up images of employees sitting around the house in pyjamas, and savvy businesses are realising that it is a model that offers them a competitive advantage in a tough economic climate.” [Personnel Today](#).

### **Holiday row**

About 130 RMT and TSSA members at rail firm C2C are set to strike for 24 hours on 16 February in a dispute over the company’s refusal to shift on its ‘abysmal’ holiday policy – which includes paying staff only for bank holidays they work. The unions say the company, a National Express subsidiary, has failed to increase leave entitlement of 22 days – despite new regulations that stipulate a minimum entitlement of 28 days’ paid leave from April. [TSSA news release](#). [RMT news release](#).

## **EVENTS**

### **TUC International Women’s Day events**

Unions in the UK will mark International Women’s Day, 8 March, with local, regional and national events. Two are already in the diary – although as 8 March this year is a Sunday, they fall either side of the day itself. A TUC evening reception on 9 March is on the theme ‘Women Workers’ Rights’. Invited speakers include Kate Allen, Amnesty International UK director, palm oil workers from south east Asia, and Kwasi Adu Amankwah, general secretary of the African regional centre of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC Africa). Northern TUC is planning a ‘Women in the World and Women in the Region’ event for 7 March, the day before International Women’s Day. Northern TUC says its event includes inspirational speakers from Palestine, Colombia and Burma.

- [TUC evening reception, London](#), 9 March – further details, [Aisha Latif](#).
- [Northern TUC event briefing](#), 7 March - to register interest in the event, email [Ananthi Parkin](#).

## **RESOURCES**

### **Blogging useful TUC resources**

If you like your online news up to the minute and with a union twist, the TUC can help. TUC’s ToUChstone blog tells the story on policy issues in the public eye – or that ought to be. We are not talking dry policy perspectives – this blog provides digestible news bites written from a TUC perspective, often dealing with issues where as yet there is no settled TUC policy. There are contributions from right across the policy spectrum, including news items from members of TUC’s equality and work-life balance team. The ToUChstone blog also has a partner in print – ‘ToUChstone’ is also the name of a new series of pamphlets produced by the TUC. They are not statements of TUC policy but instead are designed to inform and stimulate debate on the most pressing issues facing British policymakers. If you are looking for news with a trade union organising slant, there’s a separate ‘Stronger Unions’ blog too. You can add your thoughts, but TUC notes: “We welcome debate and we don’t expect everyone to agree with us, but this is our blog and we will remove any comments that are offensive, irrelevant or otherwise annoy.”

- [TUC ToUChstone blog](#) and [publications website](#). [Stronger Unions blog](#).

### **US Labor Project for Working Families curriculum**

The US-based Labor Project for Working Families has made available free online its recently revised ‘Making it work better: A work family educational program’. The resource is intended to help union instructors, facilitators

and discussion leaders educate union members and leaders about work family issues. The 3½ hour curriculum contains short modules that it says can be incorporated into existing union training. Alternatively, the curriculum can be used in its entirety to train bargaining committees, stewards or rank and file members. Although the resource from the award-winning project is targeted at a US audience, it is an excellent, thought-provoking strategy guide for any union rep, officer or trade union tutor dealing with these issues.

- [Making it work better: A work family educational program.](#)

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### **Canada: Union investigates work-life stresses**

A Canadian union is investigating the impact of growing, recession-driven work-life stresses on its members. The National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) says studies show that during economical downturns, women suffer higher degrees of stress and often suffer more financial and employment consequences of a depressed economy. This can affect their well-being and their ability to participate in union and other activities. “It is no surprise that women are reporting the highest levels of stress, stress related illnesses, burnout and depression ever recorded,” the union says. “The impact of the situation reaches far beyond the workplace, home and personal well-being of women. As demands increase, it becomes extremely difficult for women to find the time to volunteer in their community, get involved in their union or run for political office. Many union women report that they would be more actively involved in their locals or run for office if they had more time.” The union is now undertaking a survey directed to both union and non-union women with the intention of giving a “voice to an issue that impacts Canadian women so dramatically.”

- [NUPGE news report.](#)

### **Europe: States get their work-life orders**

The Council of Europe has reviewed progress on ‘Women and the economy: Reconciliation of work and family life.’ The council conclusions, agreed at a December 2008 meeting, map out the current situation on gender equalities in the European Union and the related legislation. The Council also calls for action from both member states and the European Commission. Member states are told to improve the quality, affordability and accessibility of childcare. They are also told “to step up progress towards meeting the needs of families who have to take on responsibility for dependants”, “to continue to take the necessary measures to encourage men to share family and domestic responsibilities with women on an equal footing” and “to promote measures to eradicate gender stereotypes, so as to change the representation of the roles of men and women in work, family and private life.” Other items on the members states’ to-do list include “to encourage enterprises to adopt family-friendly measures and to take into account the need to reconcile work and family life in their working time arrangements”, “to take into consideration gender equality in family leave schemes, as well as the implications of part-time work for men and women respectively, in order to avoid any negative effects that they may have, inter alia, on the employment of women,” and, finally, “to take into account, when implementing the common principles of flexicurity... their implications for gender equality, the reconciliation of work, family and private life, and a life-cycle approach.”

- Council conclusions on the progress of the implementation by the Member States and the EU institutions of the Beijing Platform for Action - Women and the economy: Reconciliation of work and family life [\[pdf\]](#).

### **USA: Dressing down for Nestlé on work clothes**

Workers forced to change into work and protective clothing in their own time have won back wages from a US company that is part of

the multinational Nestlé. Nestlé Prepared Foods will have to pay out US\$5.1 million (approximately £3.6m) in back wages to 6,000 workers. A US Department of Labor (DoL) news release notes: “Investigators found that production, maintenance and cleaning workers at manufacturing facilities in Chatsworth, Calif., Springville, Utah, and Jonesboro, Ark., were not paid for time spent putting on required equipment and clothing and removing it before and after their shifts, as required by the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).” Nestlé subsequently identified additional back wages due to workers at plants in Kentucky, Ohio, and South Carolina, with reviews at other facilities still in progress. “All the workers due back wages worked at facilities manufacturing products such as Hot Pockets, Lean Cuisine and Stouffers frozen foods. The workers will receive back wages for work performed between Dec. 15, 2006, and Dec. 15, 2008,” the DoL news release said. “The FLSA requires that covered employees be paid for required time spent before and after shifts 'donning and doffing,' or putting on and removing certain uniforms, protective clothing and safety equipment, as well as for time spent between locker rooms and production areas once work time has begun.”

- [IUF news report. Department of Labor news release.](#)

## GLOBAL ROUND-UP

### Pushed part-time

The number of US workers pressed into part-time work has increased dramatically. In November 2008, 7.3 million persons were employed part-time for economic reasons, up by 3.4 million from the recent low of 3.9 million in April 2006, with the percentage of total employment made up of involuntary part-time workers up by 2.4 per cent to 5.1 per cent over the same period. Bureau of Labor Statistics report [[pdf](#)].

### More women

Women are poised to surpass men on the USA’s payrolls, making up the majority in employment for the first time in American history. But a 5 February report in the New York Times says the reason has less to do with gender equality than with where the jobs axe is falling. [New York Times](#).

### Obama acts

The first piece of legislation signed by President Obama was an equal pay law. The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act will give workers alleging pay discrimination more time to take their cases to court and effectively reverses a US Supreme Court decision that limited Ledbetter's ability to sue after she discovered that Goodyear had been paying higher salaries to her male counterparts for nearly 20 years. [AFL-CIO Now Blog](#). [Washington Post](#).

### Women’s wage

Further evidence of ongoing gender pay gaps from New Zealand, where the pay of women in public sector jobs continues to lag behind the pay of their male equivalents by up to 35 per cent. The NZ Human Rights Commission says the evidence of workplace gender inequality is now indisputable, and has called on public organisations to take action. [The Press](#).