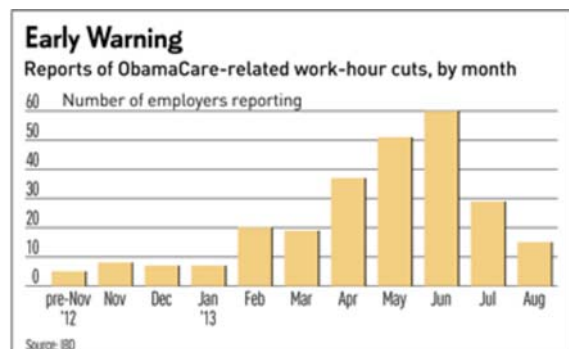


ObamaCare: 258 Employers Cut Work Hours, Jobs So Far

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public-sector employers.

Almost all of those employers have cut the hours of part-time workers to below 30 per week — the point at which [ObamaCare's insurance mandate](#) kicks in.

A few have cut payrolls to steer clear of ObamaCare's 50 full-time-equivalent-worker definition of a large employer subject to employer fines. A few others have reduced staff while contracting with employment services firms to limit their ObamaCare exposure.

The scorecard reflects an extensive, though less than exhaustive, search. It only includes employers when there is convincing documentation (generally news accounts or public records) that job actions are specifically tied to ObamaCare.

For example, when [Forever 21 said it was cutting hours for 192 workers to 29.5 per week](#) or [Lowe's \(LOW\) said it would hire 9,000 permanent workers — all part-time](#) — the ObamaCare connection wasn't quite the slam dunk needed to land them on this list.

Because private firms may fear bad publicity or litigation if they admit to cutting hours to avoid ObamaCare's coverage mandate, it's not surprising that few would be willing to come right out and say it. It's only logical to take their denials with a grain of salt.

Public employers, on the other hand, tend to make decisions in a much more transparent way. Even here, limiting hours for part-timers is often an administrative, rather than legislative, action, so documentation may be hard to come by.

All this is to say that the list in no way represents an accounting of ObamaCare's actual impact on work hours.

Further, because relatively few employers on the list have provided specifics, the scorecard's total of 19,300 workers facing reduced hours should in no way be used to minimize ObamaCare's impact.

One useful bit of information that can be gleaned from the list is that 110 of the reports of reduced hours came in May and June alone. This flurry of activity has subsided significantly since the White House announced on July 2 a one-year delay of employer penalties.

The take-away: Many employers were only just beginning to understand and respond to ObamaCare's regulations that were confusing and late in coming. This suggests another flurry of work-hour reductions can be expected next spring — assuming the mandate is still expected to come into force. That's because penalties for 2015 will be based on staffing levels starting in the second half of 2014 — at the latest.

The private-sector anecdotal entries help interpret industry workweek data. The list includes sharp hour reductions by several firms that provide social assistance to the elderly. That suggests it is no mere coincidence that the workweek among providers of services to the elderly and disabled has tumbled to a record-low 27.6 hours.

Further, it is evident — and hardly surprising — that the private-sector hour cuts have virtually all come in low-wage industries.

Therefore, to evaluate ObamaCare's impact on the workweek, focus on low-wage industries. Over the past 18 months, the [low-wage workweek has fallen](#) back near the recessionary low-point.

More than 250 employers have cut work hours, jobs or taken other steps to avoid ObamaCare costs, according to a new IBD analysis.

Mind the data has been the refrain from the White House as it downplays anecdotal reports of employers limiting workers to fewer than 30 hours per week.

But the anecdotes are piling high enough that they now constitute a body of data that can help gauge the impact of the Affordable Care Act's employer mandate.

IBD is introducing [ObamaCare Employer Mandate: A List Of Cuts To Work Hours, Jobs](#) — a compilation of employers who have opted to restrict work hours to limit new liability for employee health coverage.

As of Sept. 3, this list has reached 258 — including more than 200

The list of more than 200 public-sector employers cutting work hours is surely the most surprising revelation.

The main take-away is that ObamaCare's employer mandate is a real problem for the segment of public-sector employers who offer generous coverage (as most all of them do) but don't cover part-timers who work more than 30 hours.

In at least one case, the list goes beyond mere anecdote to reveal a clear pattern. It includes 34 universities and colleges — or college systems — cutting hours of part-time or adjunct faculty. That may not seem like much, until you consider that those reports cover more than 150 campuses attended by more than 1.4 million students.

Another 67 entries on the list involve school boards cutting hours of part-time instructional aides, cafeteria workers, bus drivers and coaches.

The entire list is available on our website, in a format that can be easily downloaded into a spreadsheet for further analysis. It will continue to be updated as more employer announcements are made.

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