

# The Working Conditions of Education Support Professionals (ESPs):

Testimony regarding HF 1348 / SF 1318

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Minnesota House of Representatives ♦ Education Finance Committee

Minnesota Senate ♦ Education Finance Committee

# The Economic Policy Institute:

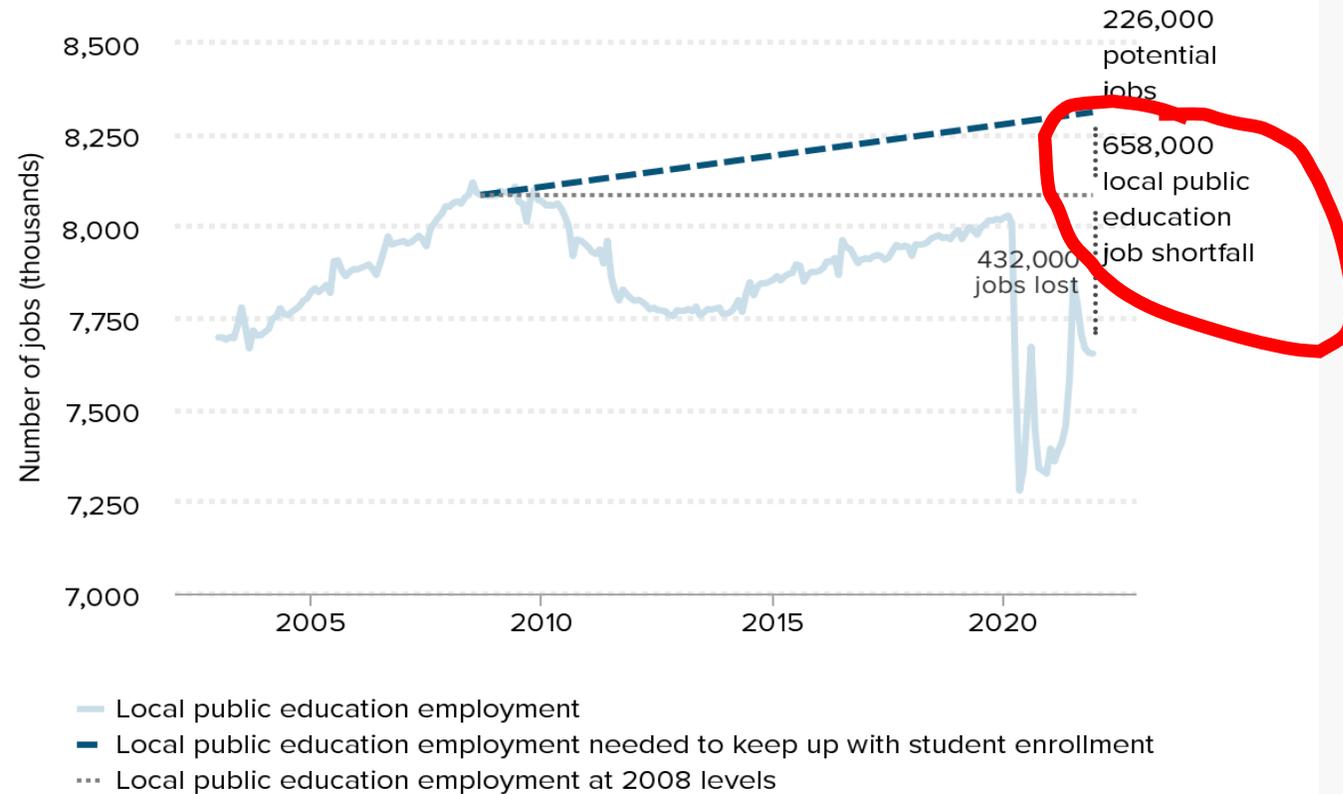
- An independent, nonprofit think tank that researches the impact of economic trends and policies on working people and advocates for better wages, benefits, and a voice on the job.
- A partner in producing and uplifting state and local policy research.

## Economic Analysis and Research Network:

- A nationwide network of research, policy, and advocacy organizations fighting, state by state, for an economy that works for everyone, coordinated by EPI.
- Member organizations in nearly 60 state and local organizations in 43 states and D.C. – in Minnesota it is the [Minnesota Budget Project](#)

# The National Picture: Public K-12 employment has collapsed

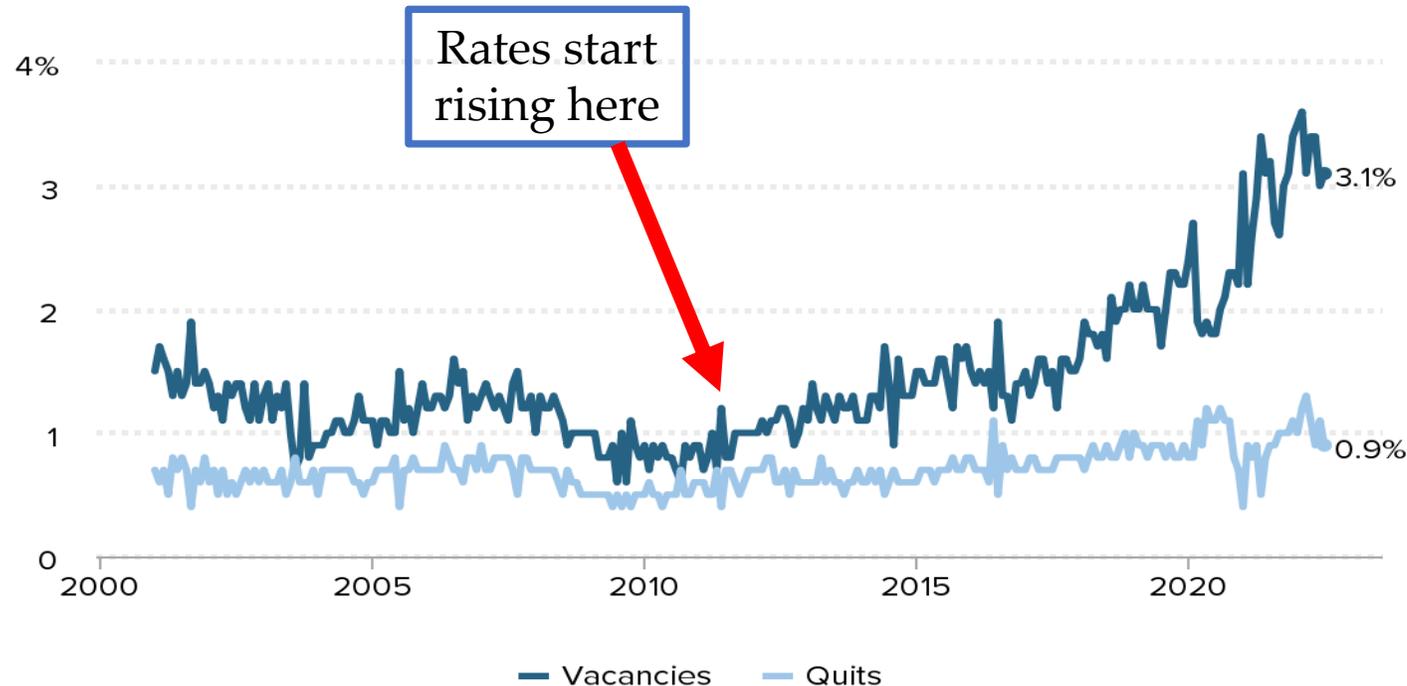
Local public education employment and employment needed to keep up with enrollment, 2003–2021



**Source:** Reproduced from Gould 2020, “Public Education Job Losses in April Are Already Greater Than in All of the Great Recession.” EPI analysis of data from the Current Employment Statistics public data series and U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

# This isn't just the pandemic – K-12 'quit rates' and 'vacancy rates' were accelerating in the 2010s

State and local government education vacancy and quit rates, January 2001–July 2022



**Note:** Data include community colleges, state colleges, and universities, and nonteaching jobs at all levels of education.

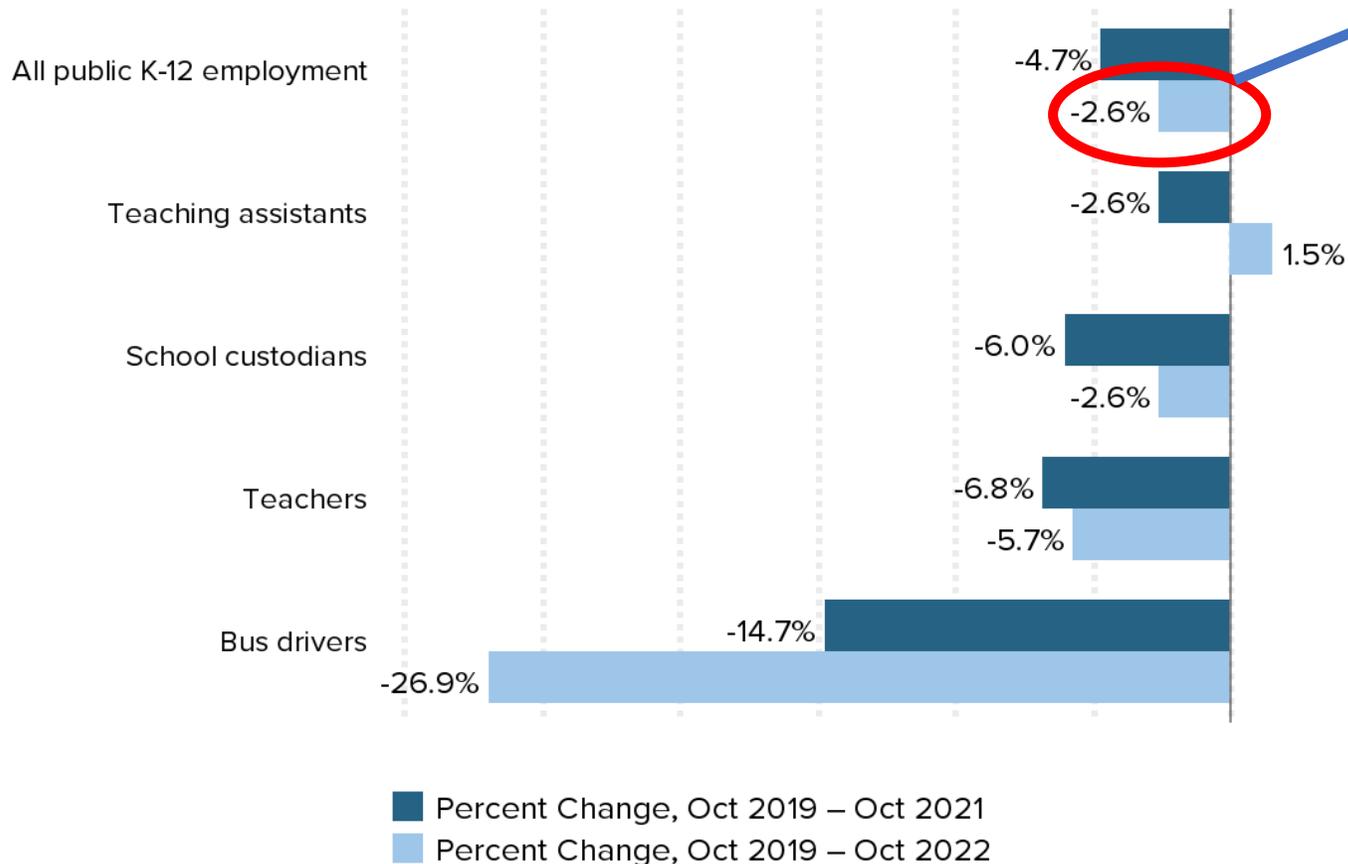
**Source:** EPI analysis of JOLTS data (Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS), Public data series accessed through the [JOLTS databases](#), 2022).

# Minnesota's overall employment picture is good, but not in K-12 education jobs

	USA	Minnesota
Unemployment Rate	3.5%	2.5%
Labor Force Participation Rate	62.3%	67.9%
Change in K-12 education jobs	-2.4%	-6.4%

# National job losses among Education Support Professionals (ESPs) are significant, and MN is even worse

Percent change in employment levels from Oct 2019 – Oct 2021 and Oct 2019 – Oct 2022 for select K–12 public education occupations



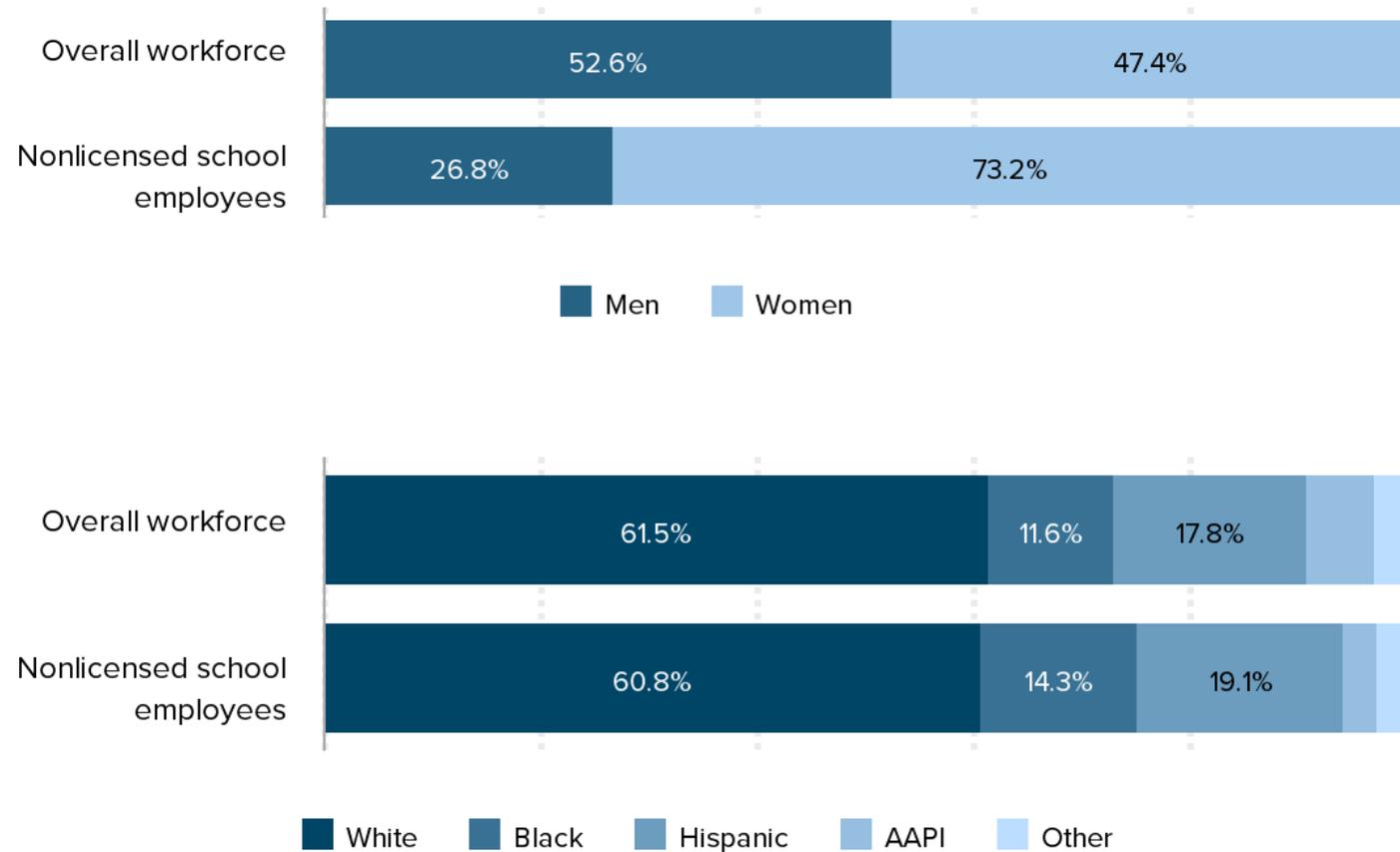
*This is the national number from October – the Minnesota number now is 6.4%!!!!*

Source: Adapted from Dave Cooper and Sebastian Martinez Hickey, "Raising Pay in Public K-12 Schools Is Critical to Solving Staffing Shortages"

<https://www.epi.org/publication/solving-k-12-staffing-shortages/>



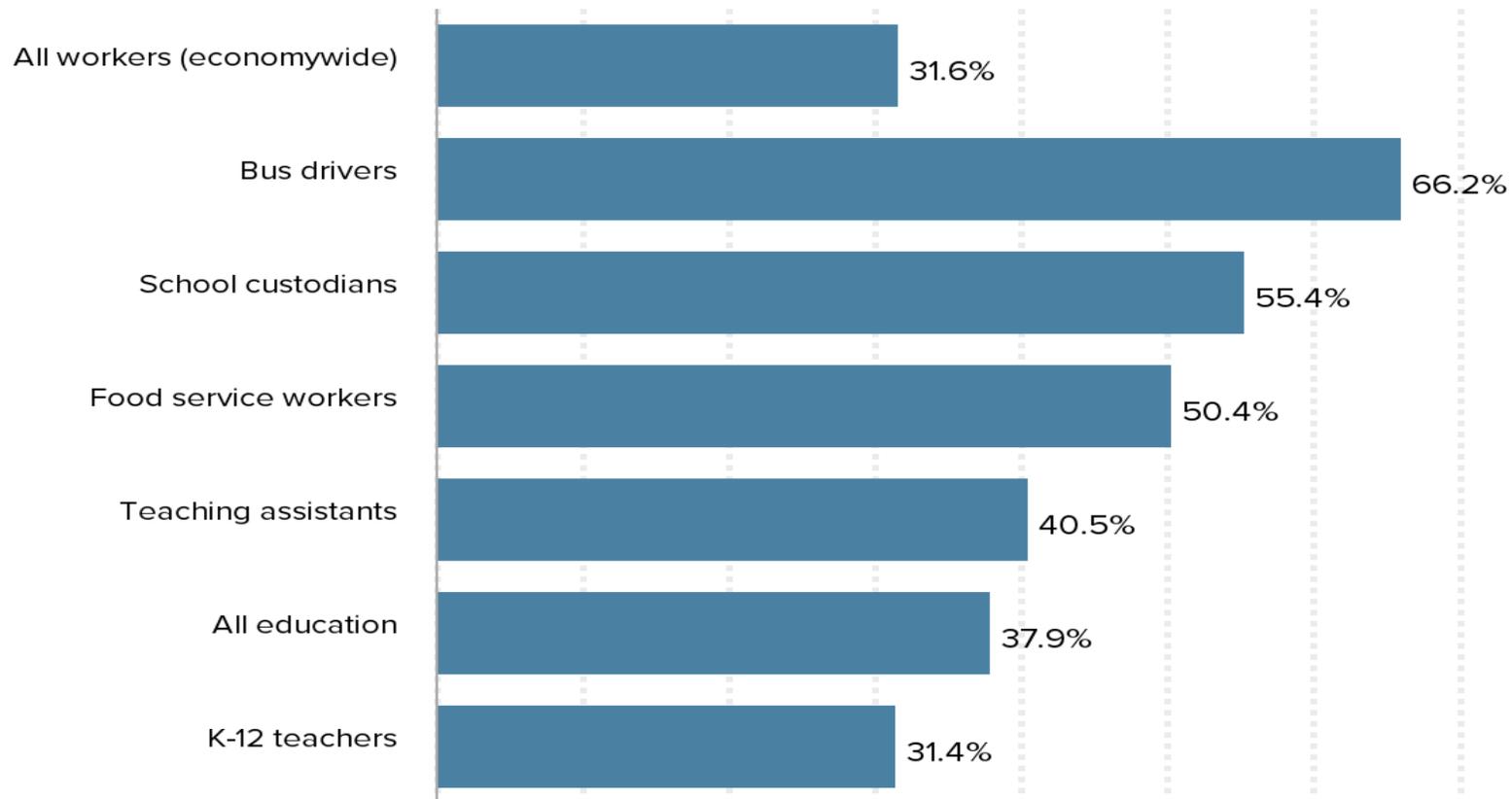
# ESPs are more likely to be women and people of color



Source: EPI analysis of 2019 ACS microdata.

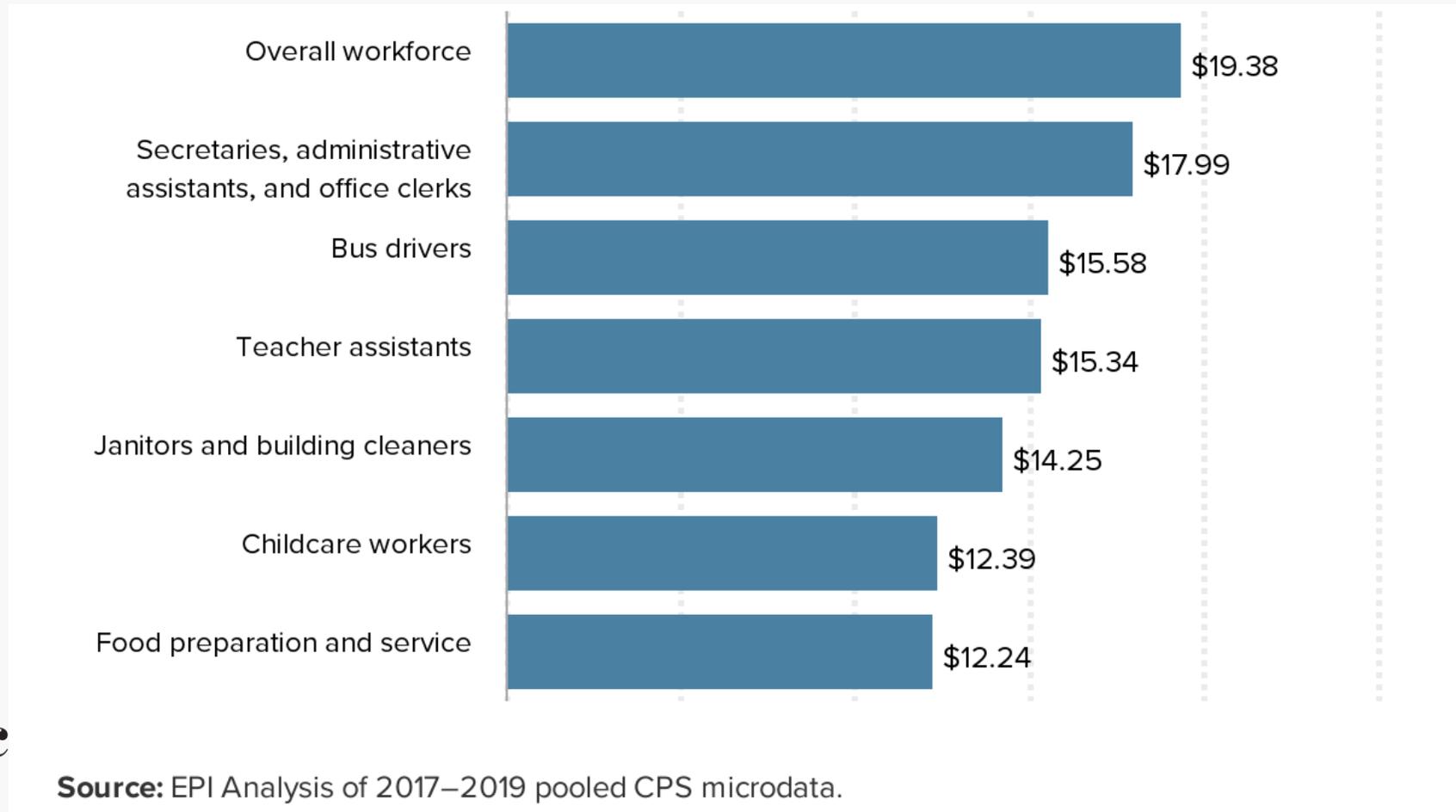
# ESPs are older than typical workers

Shares of K–12 public education support workers and workers in the overall economy who are age 50 or older



Source: Dave Cooper and Sebastian Martinez Hickey, "Raising Pay in Public K-12 Schools Is Critical to Solving Staffing Shortages" <https://www.epi.org/publication/solving-k-12-staffing-shortages/>

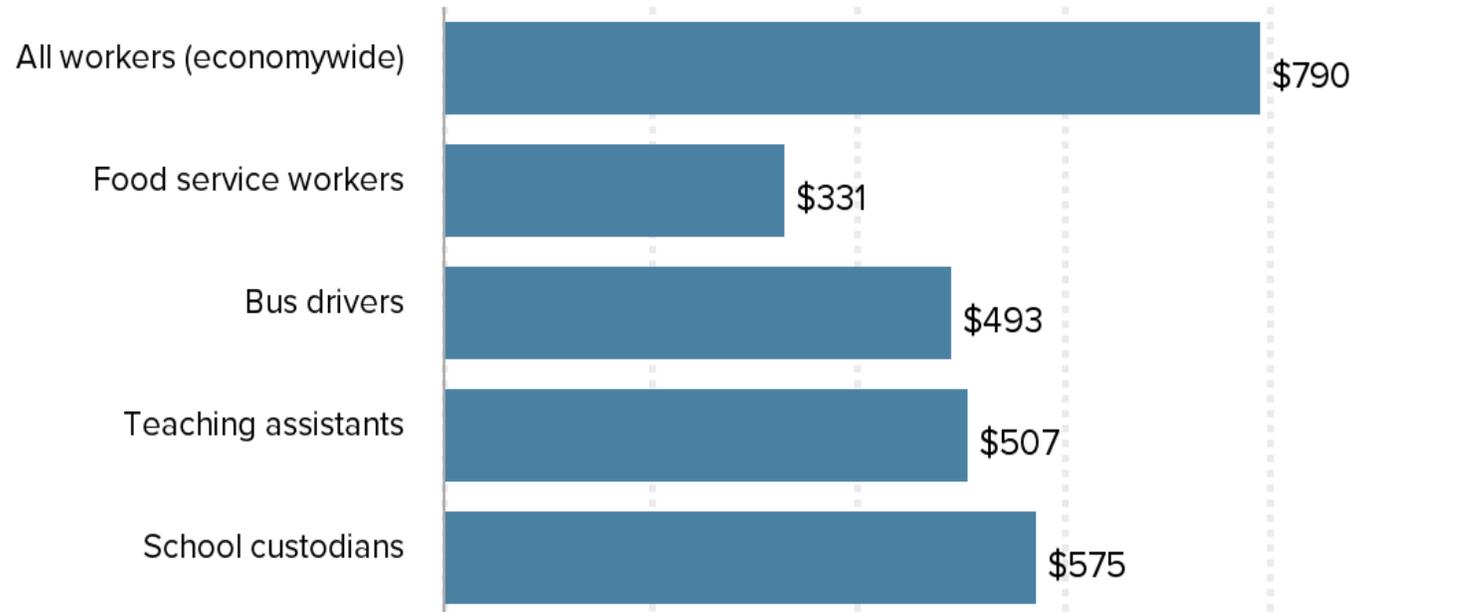
# Their hourly earnings are below the typical worker



Source: Dave Cooper and Sebastian Martinez Hickey, "Raising Pay in Public K-12 Schools Is Critical to Solving Staffing Shortages" <https://www.epi.org/publication/solving-k-12-staffing-shortages/>

# Their weekly wages are even lower, because fewer work 40 hours

Weekly median wages of all workers and K–12 public education support workers



**Notes:** Weekly wages in 2020 dollars.

**Source:** EPI analysis of 2014–2019 pooled Current Population Survey microdata.

Source: Dave Cooper and Sebastian Martinez Hickey, "Raising Pay in Public K-12 Schools Is Critical to Solving Staffing Shortages" <https://www.epi.org/publication/solving-k-12-staffing-shortages/>

# Policy Recommendations

- Increase ESP pay and benefits to attract and retain workers
- Find ways to support part-time and part-year staff when school is not in session
- Support opportunities for ESPs to expand their skills and capacities in the workplace

# Thank you!

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