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In the United States, employees typically work five days a week for eight hours each day. However, many employees want to work a four-day week and are willing to accept less pay in order to do so. A mandatory policy requiring companies to offer their employees the option of working a four-day workweek for four-fifths (80 percent) of their normal pay would benefit the economy as a whole as well as the individual companies and the employees who decided to take the option. The shortened workweek would increase company profits because employees would feel more rested and alert, and as a result, they would make fewer costly errors in their work. Hiring more staff to ensure that the same amount of work would be accomplished would not result in additional payroll costs because four-day employees would only be paid 80 percent of the normal rate. In the end, companies would have fewer overworked and error-prone employees for the same money, which would increase company profits. For the country as a whole, one of the primary benefits of offering this option to employees is that it would reduce unemployment rates. If many full-time employees started working fewer hours, some of their workload would have to be shifted to others. Thus, for every four employees who went on an 80 percent week, a new employee could be hired at the 80 percent rate. Finally, the option of a four-day workweek would be better for individual employees. Employees who could afford a lower salary in exchange for more free time could improve the quality of their lives by spending the extra time with their families, pursuing private interests, or enjoying leisure activities.

Now listen to part of a lecture on the topic you just read about. Offering employees the option of a four-day workweek won't affect company profits, economic conditions, or the lives of employees in the ways the reading suggests. First, offering a four-day workweek will probably force companies to spend more—possibly a lot more. Adding new workers means putting much more money into providing training and medical benefits; remember... the costs of things like health benefits can be the same whether an employee works four days or five. And having more employees also requires more office space and more computers. These additional costs would quickly cut into company profits. Second, with respect to overall employment, it doesn't follow that once some employees choose a four-day workweek, many more jobs will become available. Hiring new workers is costly, as I argued a moment ago. And companies have other options: they might just choose to ask their employees to work overtime to make up the difference. Worse, companies might raise expectations... they might start to expect that their four-day employees can do the same amount of work they used to do in five days. If this happens, then no additional jobs will be created and current jobs will become more unpleasant. Finally, while a four-day workweek offers employees more free time to invest in their personal lives, it also presents some risks that could end up reducing their quality of life. Working a shorter week can decrease employees' job stability and harm their chances for advancing their careers. Four-day employees are likely to be the first to lose their jobs during an economic downturn. They may also be passed over for promotions because companies might prefer to have five-day employees in management positions to ensure continuous coverage and consistent supervision for the entire workweek.

Summarize the points made in the lecture, being sure to explain how they cast

doubt on specific points made in the reading passage.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? At universities and colleges, sports and social activities are just as important as classes and libraries and should receive equal financial support. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.