Living Paycheck to Paycheck is a Way of Life for Majority of U.S. Workers, According to New CareerBuilder Survey

Study Highlights:
- 78 percent of U.S. workers live paycheck to paycheck to make ends meet
- Nearly one in 10 workers making $100,000+ live paycheck to paycheck
- More than 1 in 4 workers do not set aside any savings each month
- Nearly 3 in 4 workers say they are in debt today - more than half think they will always be
- More than half of minimum wage workers say they have to work more than one job to make ends meet

CHICAGO and ATLANTA, Aug. 24, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- Do you countdown to payday? You're not alone. More than three-quarters of workers (78 percent) are living paycheck-to-paycheck to make ends meet — up from 75 percent last year and a trait more common in women than men — 81 vs. 75 percent, according to new CareerBuilder research. Thirty-eight percent of employees said they sometimes live paycheck-to-paycheck, 17 percent said they usually do and 23 percent said they always do.

The national survey, which was conducted online by Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder from May 24 to June 16, 2017, included representative samples of 2,369 full-time employers and 3,462 full-time U.S. workers across industries and company sizes in the private sector.

More Money, Less Financial Headaches?
Having a higher salary doesn't necessarily mean money woes are behind you, with nearly one in 10 workers making $100,000 or more (9 percent) saying they usually or always live paycheck-to-paycheck and 59 percent in that income bracket in debt. Twenty-eight percent of workers making $50,000-$99,999 usually or always live paycheck to paycheck, 70 percent are in debt; and 51 percent of those making less than $50,000 usually or always live paycheck to paycheck to make ends meet, 73 percent are in debt.

"As an employer, your employees' financial problems become your financial problems," said Rosemary Haefner, chief human resources officer for CareerBuilder. "If workers are constantly thinking about their financial struggles, their quality of work can decrease, and it can take a hit on their morale and productivity. If you do what you can to help people keep their finances under control — by doing things such as matching 401(k) contributions or hosting financial planning seminars — you'll ease some of their financial worries and it will be less likely to have a negative impact on your business."

Debt is a Growing Issue for Workers
A quarter of workers (25 percent) have not been able to make ends meet every month in the last year, and 20 percent have missed payment on some smaller bills. Further, 71 percent of all workers say they're in debt — up from 68 percent last year. While 46 percent say their debt is manageable, more than half of those in debt (56 percent) say they feel they will always be in debt. And it should be noted that 18 percent of all workers have reduced their 401k contribution and/or personal savings in the last year, more than a third (38 percent) do not participate in a 401k plan, IRA or comparable retirement plan, and 26 percent have not set aside any savings each month in the last year.

Less than a third of workers (32 percent) stick to a clearly defined budget and a slight majority (56 percent) save $100 or less a month:

- None: 26 percent
- Less than $50: 15 percent
- $51 to $100: 16 percent
- $101 to $250: 14 percent
- $251 to $500: 11 percent
- $501 to $750: 5 percent
- $751 to $1,000: 4 percent
- More than $1,000: 10 percent

Still, despite financial woes, there are certain things employees aren't willing to give up. When asked what they'd absolutely not give up, regardless of financial concerns, employees cited:

- Internet connection: 54 percent
- Mobile device (smart phone, tablet, etc.): 53 percent
- Driving: 48 percent
- Pets: 37 percent
- Cable: 21 percent

- Going out to eat: 19 percent
- Traveling: 17 percent
- Education: 13 percent
- Buying gifts for people: 13 percent
- Alcohol: 11 percent

Minimum Wage Workers Can't Make Ends Meet
The majority of workers (81 percent) have worked a minimum wage job, and 71 percent of them were not able to make ends meet financially during that time — more than half (54 percent) had to work more than one job.

To alleviate some financial burden, 83 percent of employers that are hiring minimum wage workers this year (45 percent) will be raising the minimum wage at their organization.

Survey Methodology
This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder among 2,369 hiring and human resource managers ages 18 and over (employed full-time, not self-employed, non-government) and 3,462 employees ages 18 and over (employed full-time, not self-employed, non-government) between May 24 and June 16, 2017 (percentages for some questions are based on a subset, based on their responses to certain questions). With pure probability samples of 2,369 and 3,462, one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have sampling errors of +/- 2.01 and +/- 1.67 percentage points, respectively. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

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