

Minimum Wage Survey Responses Feb. 25, 2014

- I don't believe that the minimum wage should be increased at this time.
- I feel that the Chamber should support the effort to increase the minimum wage. We employ 105 people, 12 of whom earn minimum wage, and all 12 are part-time employees. We feel that if the federal government does not pass an increase, our state government should do so. We feel that it will help our business, and an increase would not cause us to consider laying anyone off.
- The minimum wage increase could adversely affect our business in that we currently offer starting salaries that are in the \$9.50 to \$12 range, dependent upon the position and experience of the candidate....but we also are one of the few employers that also offer, and pay for 100% of the employee's health insurance coverage....being forced to pay a wage that may be slightly higher, may force us to settle for a less qualified candidate, and may also force us to change our current ability to continue to pay for the entire cost of health insurance, or decrease the cost by offering a plan w/ less coverage....which are both undesirable options.
- Currently my employees are compensated at rates higher than Minimum Wage. I agree with the concept of empowering an employee to earn more based on production and performance. There is nothing wrong with rewarding a great work ethic. The caution with increasing Minimum Wage is, does it feed the perception of entitlement by the employees? I'm not convinced Indiana County should support increasing Minimum Wage.
- An increase in the minimum wage will hurt our non-profit early care and education agency. We do not have any big profit margin to draw upon to pay increased wages - and not only current minimum wage earners would expect an increase - how about people who are not too far above the minimum? Our staff are already in effect subsidizing child care costs with their low salaries - and although we know it would be a burden on families to have fees increase - we would have no choice but to raise fees - and the reality is, certainly single parents, and both parents in many, many families must work to support their families. Somehow people in favor of a minimum wage increase conveniently forget that the funds to pay an increase must come out of someone's pocket. I am sure an increase would be great for a high school student living at home who still manages to find a part time job. For us, an increase spells DISASTER!!
- This increase should not be supported. We are a small business but never had a minimum wage earner, our wages are based on qualifications and merit. This will only decrease employment and increase the cost of the goods we are purchasing. Government has consistently over regulated all aspects of our lives and typically achieve the opposite than was intended.
- Our business has always started employees higher than the minimum wage so I don't think this will hurt businesses. It will just help the people/employees.

- I feel it will hurt small businesses and result in increased costs to consumers, thus resulting in decreased business to those affected. Many of the jobs are entry level positions and not meant to be a permanent thing. It encourages people to gain experience and understanding of work while in high school or college. I oppose the increase and feel it will only hurt the economy further. It will result in the elimination of jobs rather than the increase of jobs.
- I'm relatively new at running a small business and I can already see how devastating a large increase in minimum wage would be. Not only would the cost of the payroll go up, the cost of the food I am buying to prepare the meals goes up. The drivers, warehouse workers, farm hands, etc. all need paid more to be comparable to a higher minimum. So up go the prices on the menu again. Suddenly all of those around who frequent my business not only complain of my higher prices but also end up spending the extra money they are making so someone else can get paid more. It is the same problem at a higher dollar amount. Minimum wage was never set up to "live" off of. It was designed for teenagers starting into the work force and as a stepping stone. It is up to the individual to grow in their place of employment and earn a higher wage. If that is not possible, then it is their responsibility to work to find something that they can "live" off of. That being said, definitely oppose.
- If the minimum wage is increased to the \$10 limit recommended, our business will have to reduce hours and cut back staff.
- Our HR person's original calculations at \$9.00 per hour have an increase of \$500-\$600k annually. Increasing min wage also increases worker's compensation premiums, unemployment taxes paid by the employer, and employer's portion of social security tax. Increasing minimum wage impacts wages of other positions in companies. So, if a job has additional responsibility higher than the entry level position, the employee should be paid more also. The effects are far reaching into the corporate structure, not only the entry level wage owners. Our correctional business is based on bids. We are locked into these possibly for years. Our Nursing Home business is based on what insurance will pay us so we cannot raise prices there either. This business is one which cannot pass the increase to the consumer. Many of our entry level jobs require no special skills. A large increase may require cutting some benefits or higher insurance copays.
- **THE ARGUMENTS FOR a minimum wage increase might have merit IF ALL OTHER GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS WERE CURTAILED.** With the large numbers of people being affected with a minimum wage increase already existing and depending upon government programs to support them (which are all tax-payer funded) it seems redundant to open a secondary "gift box". Further, any increase in the **MINIMUM WAGE** has an upward "ripple" effect. With a wage earner making 7.50 per hour and a seasoned employee is making \$9.50 per hour -- as soon as the **MINIMUM WAGE REQUIREMENT** causes the \$7.50 wage earner to get \$10 --what do you think is the effect on the wage earner who was making \$2 more (\$9.50)--**THIS EMPLOYEE** recognizes that employee

#1 got a \$2.50 per hour wage increase -- so, then, employee #2 wants a \$2.50 hourly increase--making this employer now having to recognize a \$2.50 PER HOUR INCREASE FOR EVERY EMPLOYEE. (The ee making \$15 per hour, now wants \$17.50 --and this is what stifles employment.

- No increase. This is political vote buying. It will most definitely hurt employment as no one is going to hire an entry level person any longer at these higher levels. The Chamber should not support any minimum wage hikes that will only hurt local employment. How are our kids to learn a good work ethic when they will not get a job until they actually have skills of some sort. No one will hire a minimum wage worker at \$9 to \$10 an hour with no skills to bring to the table!
- As a member of the Chamber I would request that you oppose any legislation to increase the minimum wage. Although there are many reasons to take this position, I strongly believe such legislation is price fixing under another name, which is completely anathema to a truly free market place. The Chamber should support free markets whenever and where ever possible.
- This would hurt my business. Typically after a period of time (6 months to 1 year) my employees' wages are higher than minimum anyway. I need that lower rate for the learning process and to see if they are going to work out. I don't have any worker less than \$11.25 per hour, and most are much higher.
- Increasing the minimum wage will have a trickle-down effect. The truth is businesses including ours have an operating margin to maintain. If the minimum wage is increased we will have to increase prices as I am sure many other business will do the same. In reality nothing changes except the amount of taxes you pay.
- Please oppose any increase. Indiana, which has a large college population, will be hurt by any minimum wage increase. While many view that the minimum wage should be set at a level that creates a family sustaining income; this should not be the case. Statistics from the BLS state: "Minimum wage workers tend to be young. Although workers under age 25 represented only about one-fifth of hourly-paid workers, they made up about half of those paid the Federal minimum wage or less. Among employed teenagers paid by the hour, about 23 percent earned the minimum wage or less, compared with about 3 percent of workers age 25 and over." Many organizations can afford to provide jobs to high school and college students when a reasonable min. wage is set. Increasing the min. wage will force businesses to cut hours, cut staff, cut others pay, or pass along the added cost to consumers. I believe that Indiana, as a college town, would be adversely effected by any min. wage increase.
- **OPPOSE!!!!** The only thing a minimum wage increase does is increase the cost of goods, the cost of living and reduce profits for businesses. This will totally destroy our local economy, the Pennsylvania economy and the national economy.
- This is a sensitive issue. Basically if you pay peanuts you get monkeys working for you. In addition, high turnover costs an employer more than

raising their wages above minimum. Minimum wage jobs are for teenagers' first job experience. Sorry to say that federal laws are killing that. I would ask that you NOT support legislative action requiring a higher minimum wage. I would look to supporting revising tax laws on business so that it is not so punitive to start and run a business in Pennsylvania. In addition, when more business moves into an area, wages will naturally increase above minimum to compete for employees. By the way none of my employees started at minimum.

- I am a believer that the minimum wage should be increased. I employ a lot of unskilled labor and it will cost my company a lot of money. But making \$15,000 a year just isn't right. I do not believe in raising it more than \$8.50/HR because of the shock factor to all employers would be too great. However, there needs to be a more fair balance to the wages of this tier of employee.
- I am in support of increasing the minimum wage. Line staff that are in the trenches making businesses successful and need to be compensated. In addition, the increase may motivate individuals to seek employment instead of public assistance as a means to all. Employers could obtain financial assistance to help employee individuals and help reduce the need for public assistance. I'm not saying do away with public assistance; families on minimum wages will still need help but the financial flood of funding going into the public assistance program could be duce and the program be utilized as it was originally designed. The money that would go into public assistance could be re-routed to businesses and agencies to help employee more individuals, increasing production, creating a sense of worth among individuals, and even reducing health issues such as high blood pressure, heart attacks, depression, alcohol and drug abuse, and even possibly suicide. Yes, increase but have a plan.
- I believe in companies giving raises if able to deserving employees, and I also support efforts to make education affordable. (eliminating interest on student loans, etc.) I absolutely do not believe that raising the minimum wage will do any good, we all know that all it does is raise the prices of goods and services around us. The price of bread and milk will rise, along with everything else. It will even out to be the SAME level of living, or of poverty, for the average family. The answer is not in raising wages but rather building business in general so that there are more jobs, better paying jobs (Indiana County does not have much of either jobs or good paying jobs). Make education accessible and affordable to those that want to better themselves. Cut costs at IUP and state schools so that tuition rates can be cut instead of raised. There are a million and one other things that can be done much more effectively rather than raise minimum wage.
- We cannot find skilled workers that will work for minimum wage. Raising the minimum will push all wages up. That increase coupled with the massive increase in health care costs will have a negative effect on new hiring and expanding my employee base.

- The argument that wage increases take money out of business owner's pockets is true. But like any business that employs workers with periodic wage increases, you must consider that wages will inevitably increase and must be considered when planning your budget. You cannot expect to attract and maintain a trained, educated workforce if your wages are not competitive and keep pace with inflation. Even new workers must buy vehicles, clothes, food and shelter. And we all know that prices of goods and services are always on the increase.