

## **Hard Work Should Lift You Up, Not Keep You Struggling**

**Good Morning Chairperson Warrey and Members of the House Industry Business and Labor Committee.**

**My name is Andrea Grigsby, and I've spent nearly two decades working in structural myofascial therapy. My work has taught me one undeniable truth: stress, exhaustion, and financial strain don't just affect the wallet—they affect the body, the mind, and entire families.**

**North Dakotans take pride in hard work. We are a state built on grit, resilience, and the belief that if you put in an honest day's work, you should be able to provide for your family. That's not just economics—that's a core value we all share.**

**So, I have to ask:  
Since when did a full-time job stop being enough?**

## **The Reality We Must Confront**

**Let's put aside politics and look at the facts.**

**Would you agree that North Dakotans believe in fairness?  
Would you agree that we value self-reliance?  
Would you agree that if someone works 40 hours a week, they should be able to afford food, rent, and basic necessities?**

**If we agree on these principles, then we must also agree that \$7.25 an hour is not enough to live on.**

**Right now, a full-time minimum wage worker in North Dakota earns \$15,080 per year. That is below the federal poverty line for a single adult and nowhere near enough for a family.**

**Meanwhile, in Montana, Minnesota, and South Dakota, the average minimum wage is \$10.99 per hour.**

**If we refuse to act, we risk losing workers and businesses to neighboring states where wages have already kept up.**

## **Who Benefits From Low Wages?**

**If wages are not going to workers, where is the money going?**

**According to Federal Reserve data, the top 1% of American households now own 30% of the nation's wealth, up from 22.8% in 1990. Meanwhile, the bottom 50% of the population**

hold only 2.5% of the wealth.

([Source: USAFacts](#), [Source: Statista](#))

Let me be clear: This wealth is not being created in a vacuum.

It is being extracted from the very people who prepare our food, clean our businesses, and care for our children—yet can't afford to take care of their own families.

Profit is not profit, if it is stolen from the hard working North Dakotans, who create it.

## **Raising Wages Strengthens Our Economy**

Some will say, "We can't afford to raise wages." But I ask: How can we afford not to?

- When workers earn more, they spend more—at local businesses, grocery stores, and restaurants.
- Raising wages rewards hard work. No full-time worker should have to rely on taxpayer-funded aid just to survive.
- When wages stay low, turnover stays high—hurting businesses, increasing hiring costs, and disrupting the workforce.

Even major corporations like Walmart and Target have already raised their wages beyond the federal minimum. They know what we all know—you cannot build a strong economy on struggling workers.

## **Keeping North Dakota Competitive**

We pride ourselves on being independent and strong. But if we let our wages stagnate while our neighbors move forward, we will lose talent, lose businesses, and lose the future we want for our state.

That is why this resolution is not just about an increase to \$9.25 per hour—it's about ensuring wages keep moving with the cost of living so North Dakotans can afford to stay in North Dakota.

Hard work should lift people up, not keep them struggling.

If you work full-time, you shouldn't live in poverty—it's that simple.

I urge you to stand for North Dakota's workers, for our economy, and for the values we all hold dear.

Thank you.

Andrea Grigsby

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