

HCR 3032

Chairperson Warrey and Members of the House Industry Business and Labor Committee, I am Karen Eriksmoen from Fargo. I am in favor of the increase in the minimum wage for North Dakotans. The proposed increase from \$7.25 to \$9.25 is not as high as the recommended \$15.00 an hour wage, but it is an amount that shows we are thinking of the employers, as well as their employees. This bill also incorporates a yearly cost of living increase.

An increase in the minimum wage will do several things for the residents in North Dakota who currently cannot make ends meet on minimum wage salary and this includes reducing poverty and income inequality, higher consumer spending, improving employee retention and productivity, providing a more decent standard of living for low-wage workers, and lessen social issues by allowing people to better meet their needs.

It has been 16 years since there was an increase in the minimum wage in North Dakota. I believe an increase in the minimum wage can:

1. Increase the income of low-wage workers, which can help lift families out of poverty and reduce their reliance on government assistance programs.
2. Provide low-wage workers with more disposable income and they will be able to spend more on goods and services which can stimulate local businesses and the economy.
3. Lead to increased employee morale and loyalty, reducing costs for businesses continually seeking employees and creating a more stable workforce.
4. Help narrow the gap between the earnings of low-wage workers and higher income earners.
5. Contribute to improved health and overall well-being for low-income individuals and families.
6. Some studies suggest that higher wages can lead to increased worker productivity as employees feel more valued and motivated.

As a high school teacher, I worked with many students whose families could not make it on minimum wage salaries to provide the housing and food they needed. This led to more homelessness and food insecurity putting them and their families at risk.

I ask you to vote IN FAVOR OF HCR 3032 to increase the North Dakota minimum wage to \$9.25 per hour, especially in this time of increasing costs for food and housing. This is not too big an ask...we need our minimum wage workers and retention, and support of this workers is necessary for the future of our state.

Thank you for your consideration, Karen Eriksmoen, Fargo