2025 HOUSE INDUSTRY, BUSINESS AND LABOR

HCR 3032

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Industry, Business and Labor Committee
Room JW327C, State Capitol

HCR 3032
3/5/2025

A concurrent resolution to create and enact a new section to article XI of the Constitution of North Dakota, relating to the minimum wage.

9:01 a.m. Chairman Warrey opened the meeting.

Members Present: Chairman Warrey, Vice Chairman Ostlie, Vice Chairman Johnson, Representatives Finley-DeVille, Grindberg, Johnson, Kasper, Koppelman, Ruby, Schatz, Schauer, Vollmer

Members Absent: Representatives Bahl, Brown

Discussion Topics:

- Ballot measure
- Yearly cost of living increases
- 2009 Federal increase
- Labor shortages
- Small businesses automation
- Consumer price index
- Pressure on all wages
- Employee market
- Supply and demand
- Other benefits

9:02 a.m. Representative LaurieBeth Hager, District 21, Fargo, ND, introduced, testified and submitted testimony #38668 and #38671.

9:29 a.m. Andrew Alexis Varvel, Bismarck, ND testified in favor and submitted testimony #38790.

9:33 a.m. Andrea Grigsby, Bismarck, ND, testified in favor.

9:46 a.m. Arik Spencer, President, Greater North Dakota Chamber (GNDA), testified in opposition and submitted testimony (Andrea Pfennig) #38770.

9:54 a.m. Michael Rud, ND Petroleum Marketers and Retail Association, testified in opposition.

Additional Written Testimony:
Ross J. Nubson, West Fargo, submitted testimony in favor #38510.
Absey Zoe, Fargo, ND, submitted testimony in favor #38608.
Margo Norton, Fargo, ND, submitted testimony in favor #38616.
Heather Tyulyandin, West Fargo, ND, submitted testimony in favor #38619.

Landis Larson, ND AFL-CIO, submitted testimony as neutral #38698.
Birgit M. Pruess, Fargo, ND, submitted testimony in favor #38713.
Karen S. Eriksmoen, Fargo, ND, submitted testimony in favor #38727.
Matthew Hansen, Fargo, ND, submitted testimony in favor #38742.
Andrea M. Grigsby, Bismarck, ND, submitted testimony in favor #38748.
Jane Pettinger, Fargo, ND, submitted testimony in favor #38773.
Michael D. Connelly submitted testimony in opposition #38774.
Will Thompson, Fargo, ND, submitted testimony in favor #38791.
Carter Haas, Students For Legislative Action, submitted testimony in favor #38813.

10:01 a.m. Chairman Warrey closed the meeting

Diane Lillis, Committee Clerk

For at least the last 10 years, North Dakota's minimum wage has remained at $7.25/hr. Our workers deserve better. Our workers deserve to feel valued for their time and effort. Increase the minimum wage and start paying a fair wage that aligns with living in 2025. Thank you.

Chairperson and Members of the Industry, Business and Labor Committee,

My name is Zoe Absey and I am here today to advocate for an increase in North Dakota's minimum wage from $7.25 an hour to $9.25 an hour. While many businesses in our state may already pay above the current minimum wage, the fact remains that $7.25 an hour is still legal—and it is not a livable wage.

At $7.25 an hour, a full-time worker putting in 40 hours per week earns only $15,080 per year before taxes. That is simply not enough to afford basic necessities like rent, groceries, childcare, or transportation. In North Dakota, where the cost of living continues to rise, expecting individuals to survive on this wage is unrealistic and unjust.

We also know that we want to keep people in North Dakota, if we want to fill essential jobs in customer service, retail, and manual labor, we must pay workers fairly. This proposed increase would provide North Dakotans with better financial stability while still allowing businesses flexibility. It ensures that we are getting closer to no worker in our state being left struggling on an outdated and insufficient wage.

When our neighbors earn more, they are better able to support themselves and their families, which in turn strengthens our communities and local economies. I urge you to support this increase because no one working full-time should be living in poverty. North Dakota must do better, and this is a step in the right direction.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Zoe Absey

Testimony in support of HCR 3032, a measure to increase North Dakota's minimum wage and allow for an annual standard of living increase.

I believe this move will result in a positive economic outcome for our state, in that it will bring more potential employees to work and live here. It will also reduce our residents' reliance on public assistance. People become unnecessarily reliant on this assistance in the long term, when they cannot get a job that offers the income that assistance does.

I urge you to pass this bill to put us back into competition with other states who are offering residents and potential residents a living wage.

Margo Norton

Fargo North Dakota, district 46

Lifelong ND resident

Chair Warrey and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of HCR 3032 to raise the minimum wage in the state. When I started working at 15, nearly 10 years ago, the minimum wage was in line with the federal minimum wage of $7.25 per hour. Neither the federal minimum wage or North Dakota's minimum wage has changed in an entire decade. Those wages actually haven't been updated since 2009, now almost 16 years ago. With the yearly increases in cost of living and inflation in the country over that period of time, the purchasing power of the minimum wage has significantly decreased:

> "The value of the federal minimum wage has reached its lowest point in 66 years, according to an EPI analysis of recently released Consumer Price Index (CPI) data. Accounting for price increases in June, the current federal minimum wage of $7.25 per hour is now worth less than at any point since February 1956. At that time, the federal minimum wage was 75 cents per hour, or $7.19 in June 2022 dollars." -Economic Policy Institute

This has left our North Dakota families in the dust and forced them to take on multiple jobs at a time to live.

You might say "Well I live in (Bismarck/Fargo/Grand Forks/etc.) and it's impossible to find a job paying less than $12, $14, $15 etc. per hour!" But this is not the case in rural towns. I graduated from LaMoure High School in District 28, and was paid $7.50 per hour at my first job. When I got a different job that was only open from April 1 to September 30 every year, I started at $8 per hour, then $8.50 the next year, and $9 the third year. As a high school student, that money wasn't bad, but it is now 7 years ago that I made $9 per hour. Had I only made that much as an adult, the money would not have gone far. Small towns are, in some ways, more expensive than larger metros. Gas

and groceries have a significant markup in rural areas due to the transportation needs to get it there. So the money has even less purchasing power.

The fact of the matter is that while many urban area jobs pay more than federal minimum wage, rural ones don't always, and the money just doesn't stretch that far anymore. Our workers deserve to be paid a reasonable wage and be able to pay their bills without needing multiple jobs to make it work. This is an easy change to make for our state to support our workforce. Please vote in favor of HCR 3032.

HCR 3032

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

I am Representative LaurieBeth Hager of District 21 is in the middle portion of Fargo--north and south of Main Ave to 13th Ave S from the Red River to a small corner of West Fargo. My district includes the Historic Hawthorne Neighborhood, Jefferson, Madison or Golden Ridge Neighborhood, and almost 5000 people living in apartments and 3 mobile home parks.

I stand before you today to offer HCR 3032, a resolution for a general election ballot measure to raise the state of North Dakota's minimum wage and provide a yearly cost of living increases in subsequent years. I am here today on behalf of the 1000s of workers in our state who are not earning adequate wages. I believe that business owners in our state want to provide their workers with wages that will not keep their employees in economically disadvantaged or poverty conditions. HCR 3032 provides a method to update the state's minimum wage through a referendum. Several other states have allowed their citizens vote to establish a state minimum wage above the federal minimum wage. Establishing a state minimum wage though this process will allow for our legislative input/ directive to update minimum wages for employees in our state.

HRC 3032 proposes to increase the state's minimum wage from the federal standard of $7.25 to $9.25 per hour. It also incorporates a yearly cost of living increase. While an increase to $9.25 would still be lower than a recommended living wage of $15.00, I believe the proposed $2.00 increase will be respectful to business owners and to their employees. It will be a start to keeping people from living in poverty.

Increasing the minimum wage in our state is long overdue. The minimum wage was last increased at the federal level in 2009. That is 16 years ago! So any increase above the federal minimum wage is long overdue. During those 16 years, many other states have implemented a higher minimum wage for the employees in their state. North Dakota has not.

Currently ND employees earning the minimum wage are paid $7. 25 per hour which is the Federal Minimum wage. This federal minimum wage was established in 2009—16 years ago. 16 years without even a cost of living increase. This legislation would resolve financial problems for individuals who earn minimum wage some of whom may need to rely on other systems for support.

Why should minimum wage be increased? The primary reason is increasing minimum wage is a strategic method for reducing poverty by decreasing persons living in poverty.

Who earns minimum wage? Often it is entry level jobs but also it is jobs held by elderly who have returned to the workforce after retirement or due to economic factors such as loss of a spouse resulting decreased social security benefits. Some people do not have transportation or have other issues that decrease their employment options.

The rationale for increasing minimum wage in ND is threefold:

First, remaining competitive with adjacent states.

Second, providing ND residents employed in minimum wage jobs with an adequate income to remain in ND.

Third, determining ND minimum wage at the state level rather than basing it on federal standards of minimum wage.

First, raising the minimum wages to $9.25 will enable ND to be competitive with our border or adjacent states. Montana, Minnesota and South Dakota have raised the minimum wage for hourly workers in their state. HCR 3032 would make ND wages competitive and on par with these and other states across the nation.

In the USA, as of January 1, 2021

30 states have minimum wage above $7.25
25 states have a minimum wage at or above $10.00

Focusing on the 3 states bordering ND, their residents earn minimum hourly wages of:

	2025
Minnesota	$11.13
South Dakota	$11.20
Montana	$10.55

All three of these states provide for a yearly cost of living increase. If one were to average the minimum wage of MT, MN & SD it is $10.99 per hour. In ND our minimum wage is $7.25. The wage proposed $9.25 per hour in this bill is $2.00 higher than the federal minimum wage but it is lower than that average wage in the 3 states adjacent to ND.

Second, what is the yearly income of a person earning minimum wage as compared to other wage levels?

I have provided a chart that shows various hourly wage levels converted to annual incomes at the top. At the bottom are the Federal Poverty Guidelines as used for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program.

An employee working 40 hours per week at the $7.25 minimum wage would earn $ 15,080 per year. In 2025, this is BELOW the federal poverty level of $15,650 for a single person. If that minimum wage earner is providing for a family of 4, his or her earnings are well below the poverty level of $32,150.

By increasing our state's minimum wage $9.25 per hour the employee now would earn $19,240 annually by working 40 hrs per week for 52 weeks per year — still below the $32,150 poverty level for a family of 4 and just above the poverty level for a 2 person family.

Furthermore The cost of living has obviously increased in the past 15 years while the $7.25 federal/state minimum wages have NOT increased. This has created the situation that persons earning minimum wage cannot provide or budget for even ordinary expenses: housing, food, healthcare, childcare, etc. Cost of Living or Inflations Increase since 2009 is 20.6% cumulatively.

The buying power calculation indicates that what $7.25 could purchase in 2010 is

> The cost of Living or Inflation since 2009 is 47.11%
> Another way of looking at buying power is $1 in 2009 is $1.47 now or $10.00 then is 14.70 now

Third, increasing the minimum wage to $9.25 should stimulate our local ND economy while reducing poverty. Keeping workers in ND or at small businesses rather than national chain stores that have already raised minimum wages above the $7.25 federal minimum wage -- Target and Walmart are two such examples.

Who earns minimum wage? Often it is entry level jobs but also it is jobs held by elderly who have returned to the workforce after retirement or receiving merely social security benefits. Persons with disabilities, formerly incarcerated persons, persons with a poor job history.

In the past 2 sessions, I have brought minimum wage bills to the IBL committee and to the House Chamber. This year I am presenting a resolution so the people of our state can decide whether or not to increasing the minimum wage in North Dakota. Citizens in several other states across America have had the opportunity to vote whether to increase minimum wage.

As indicated in this resolution, HCR 3032, "Every employer shall pay to each of the employer's employees wages at a rate of not less than $9.25 per hour. Beginning January 1, 2027 and on January 1st each year thereafter, the minimum wage will be adjusted by the cost of living increase."

In ND's most recent general election, the 2024 election, there were 3 referred constitutional measures on the ballot:

Measure 1 Revising the names used for these institutions: Devils Lake's School for the Deaf and Dumb renamed the State School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The State Hospital for the Insane in Jamestown renamed to the State Hospital for the Care of Individuals with Mental Illness. Grafton's Institution for the Feeble Minded to the Facility for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities.

Measure 2 Specified rules and procedures for initiated measures

Measure 3 Revised the procedures of legacy fund transfers.

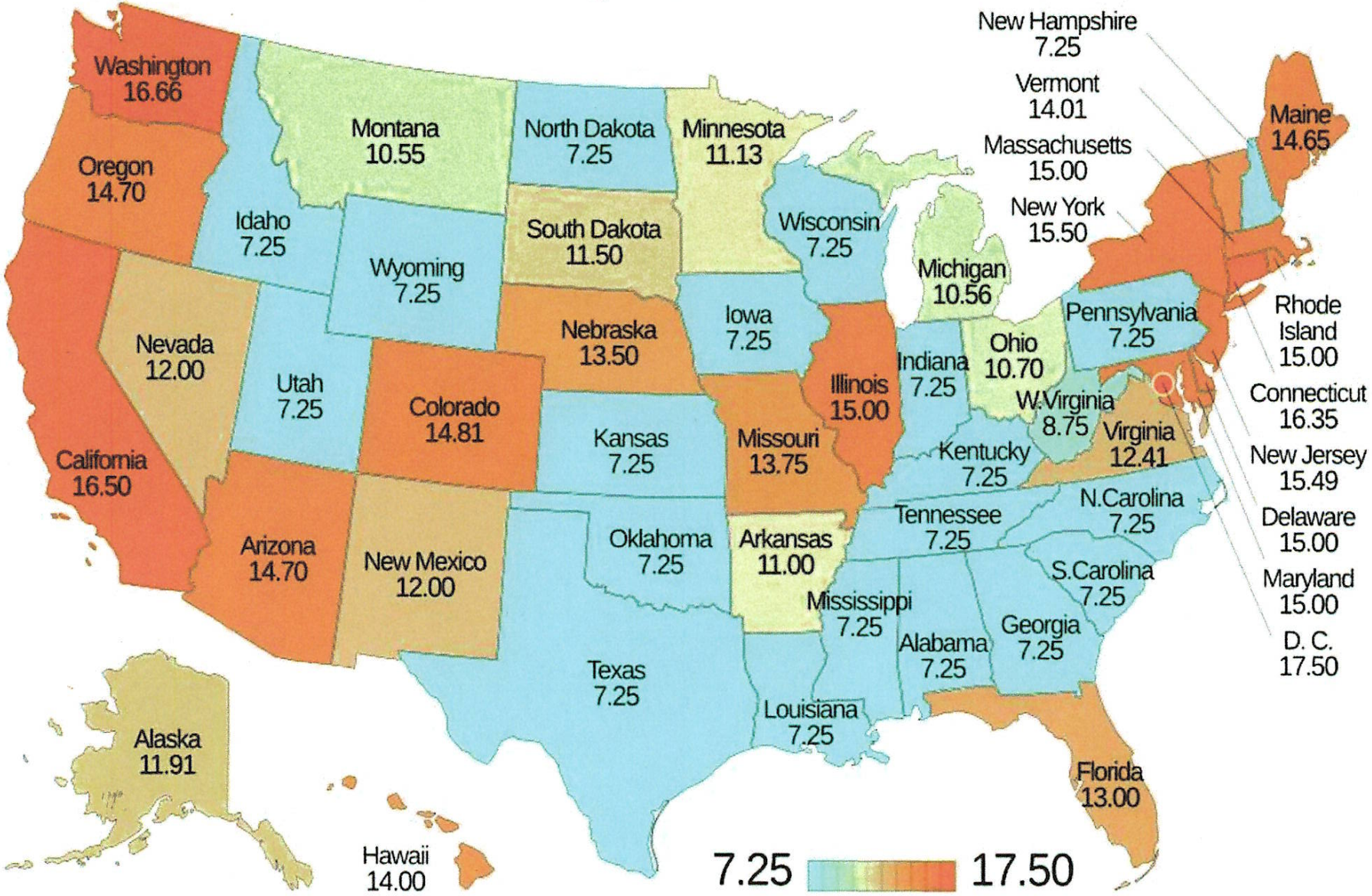
Now it is time for the voters to act upon the state's minimum wage requirement. HCR 3032 is a measure to be placed on the 2026 general election ballot. It will allow your constituents, the citizens across ND to make the decision. Even if you personally agree or disagree, by passing this resolution, the voters will have their voice heard as a way to support workers in our state.

In conclusion, often local control is the philosophy or justification behind many of the bill concepts we hear in our legislature. The ultimate local control is the voters. Let's provide the opportunity for our voters to determine our state's minimum wage for the residents of North Dakota. As I stated earlier I believe that business owners in our state want to provide their workers with wages that will not keep their employees in economically disadvantaged or poverty conditions. HCR 3032 seeks to balance the needs of wage earners AND wage providers in our state. In 2026, let's put the measure on the ballot for our citizens to determine if ND's minimum wage should be higher than the federal minimum wage.

Often I am asked or told that the free market demand has increased everybody's wages in our state and that nobody in North Dakota earns just the minimum wage. If even ONE person in our state is receiving only $7.25 per hour that is one person living in poverty whose life can be improved.

Thank you Chairperson Warrey. I stand before the IBL committee to answer questions.

State minimum wages, in dollars. Jan. 1, 2025



North Dakota AFL-CIO
1323 East Front Ave.
Bismarck ND 58504
llarson@ndaflcio.org
701-526-8787

Testimony of Landis Larson, ND AFL-CIO President
In Neutral to HBCR 3032
March 5, 2025

Chairperson Warrey and members of the House Industry, Business and Labor Committee:

My name is Landis Larson, President of the North Dakota AFL-CIO. The North Dakota AFL-CIO is the federation of labor unions in North Dakota, representing the interests of all working people in our state.

I am testifying on behalf of the North Dakota AFL-CIO in neutral to House Concurrent Resolution 3032.

The North Dakota AFL-CIO strongly advocates for raising our minimum wage of $7.25 per hour.

However, with Montana at $10.55 per hour, South Dakota at $11.50, and Minnesota at $11.13 this resolution asking for $9.25 per hour does not go far enough to make our state competitive for employees in our border cities and states.

For the above reasons the North Dakota AFL-CIO is neutral.

Respectfully Submitted,
Landis Larson
North Dakota AFL-CIO President

Birgit Pruess, Ph.D.
3696 Harrison St. S
Fargo, ND

March 4, 2025

RE: HCR3032

Dear members of the 69th Legislative Assembly of North Dakota,

I am a resident of Fargo, ND. Please, accept the below as my testimony IN FAVOR of HCR3032, a concurrent resolution "to create and enact a new section to article XI of the Constitution of North Dakota, relating to the minimum wage."

My explanation to this is very short. It is just about time. I want my neighbors to have a living wage or at least a bit closer to a living wage than they currently have. Everybody who works deserved the ability to pay their bills.

I highly recommend a DO PASS vote.

As in all my testimonies, I much appreciate the hard work and dedication that each member of my state legislative assembly puts into our state. Thank you.

Sincerely and respectfully Birgit Pruess,
Ph.D.

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

I, Matthew Hansen, of Fargo, North Dakota am in support of raising the minimum wage. If an employer cannot support paying their employees a livable wage then they should rethink their business model and not rely on cheap exploitive labor. Thank you.

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.

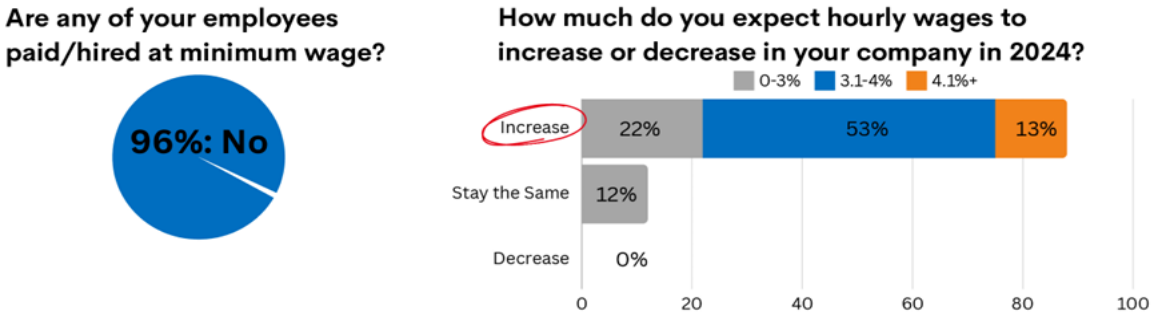
Thank you.

Andrea Grigsby
1305 N 14th St Bismarck, ND 58501

GREATER NORTH DAKOTA CHAMBER
HCR 3032
House Industry, Business, and Labor Committee
Chair Jonathan Warrey
March 4, 2025

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Arik Spencer with the Greater North Dakota Chamber. GNDC is North Dakota's largest statewide business advocacy organization, with membership represented by small and large businesses, local chambers, and trade and industry associations across the state. We stand in **Opposition** to HCR 3032.

In our 2024 ND Economics and Employer Survey of our membership, 44% of respondents indicated that they anticipated their number of employees to increase. Additionally, only 4% indicated that any of their employees are paid minimum wage and 88% indicated that they expected wages to increase.



Clearly, there are opportunities for individuals seeking both employment and wage increases in North Dakota. Additionally, it's important to note that an increase in the minimum wage rate does not automatically mean a benefit to the worker or economy. Whenever the government steps in to regulate how a business operates, there are ripple effects throughout the entire business community.

Mandated wage increases can result in fewer jobs as businesses must evaluate the cost increase and determine how they will pay the difference. The expense has to be offset somewhere on the balance sheet. Without an increase in demand for the offered products or services, businesses must reduce costs to maintain acceptable margins for the operations to stay viable.

It is not acceptable to think that a business can raise its consumer prices just to offset this new increase in expense. There are numerous factors that a business must consider when determining costs/pricing. Even if we agree that raising the prices to offset this expense would be acceptable to the marketplace then we must agree that it would not have the intended affect as the workers wage increase would be lost to the increase in costs to the products or services that these workers need or consume.

For a business to find success it must pay employees a competitive wage to attract and maintain a skilled, motivated, and experienced workforce. GNDC believes that the market should be allowed to determine the wages paid. A worker who has developed the skills and training necessary to perform certain job functions can, and should, be able to negotiate for a higher wage due to the increase in value that they bring to the position. A business can, and will, adjust the wages of employees to maintain the quality workforce necessary to operate in a competitive marketplace.

Any increase in the minimum wage can also limit opportunities for those in entry level positions or those with limited skillsets. It is through the practice of giving an employee an opportunity to learn on the job and increase their knowledge and skills that they are achieve higher compensation. By arbitrarily setting an entry wage for businesses to pay, employers then have to determine if their organization can continue to offer the opportunity to those workers, thus limiting the possibilities of jobs or training for individuals. The increase in the minimum wage again can have an adverse effect on those that it is intended to help.

GNDC respectfully requests a Do Not Pass on HCR 3032. I would stand for any questions that the committee may have.

I am Jane Pettinger, retired Assistant Professor of Management and certified Senior Professional in Human Resources. I reside at 3633 River Drive in South Fargo. My contact phone # is 701-306-4495 and I can be reached via email at pettingercrew@outlook.com.

I offer this testimony IN FAVOR OF a minimum wage increase in the State of North Dakota. **HCR 3032** proposes to raise the minimum wage by $2.00 per hour. It has been at $7.25 since 2009, when it was last raised by Congress.

Our country began requiring a minimum wage way back in 1938 with the passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act. According to the Economic Policy Institute's ***A History of the Minimum Wage*** article posted on August 31st of 2023, *"Congress raised the minimum wage fairly consistently for decades, but that began to change in the 1980s, with increases becoming fewer and farther between."* They further explain that *"Without any mechanisms in place to automatically adjust it for rising prices, the real value of the federal minimum wage has gradually declined, reaching a 66-year low in 2023, where it is now worth 42% less than its highest point in 1968. Moreover, the federal minimum wage is worth 30% less today than when it was last raised 14 years ago. This significant loss in purchasing power means that the federal minimum wage today is nowhere close to a living wage."*

Due to Congress' inaction, most states have raised their state's minimum wage. You can note which states have done so at the Economic Policy Institute's ***Minimum Wage Tracker*** at epi.org/minimum-wage-tracker/ which has been updated as recently as January 1, 2025. As this site illustrates, EVERY state surrounding North Dakota has a higher minimum wage.

- Minnesota is at $11.13,
- Montana is at $10.55, and
- South Dakota is at $11.50.

The following page contains a screen shot of the Minimum Wage Tracker web page as of 3/4/2025 at 9:00 p.m.

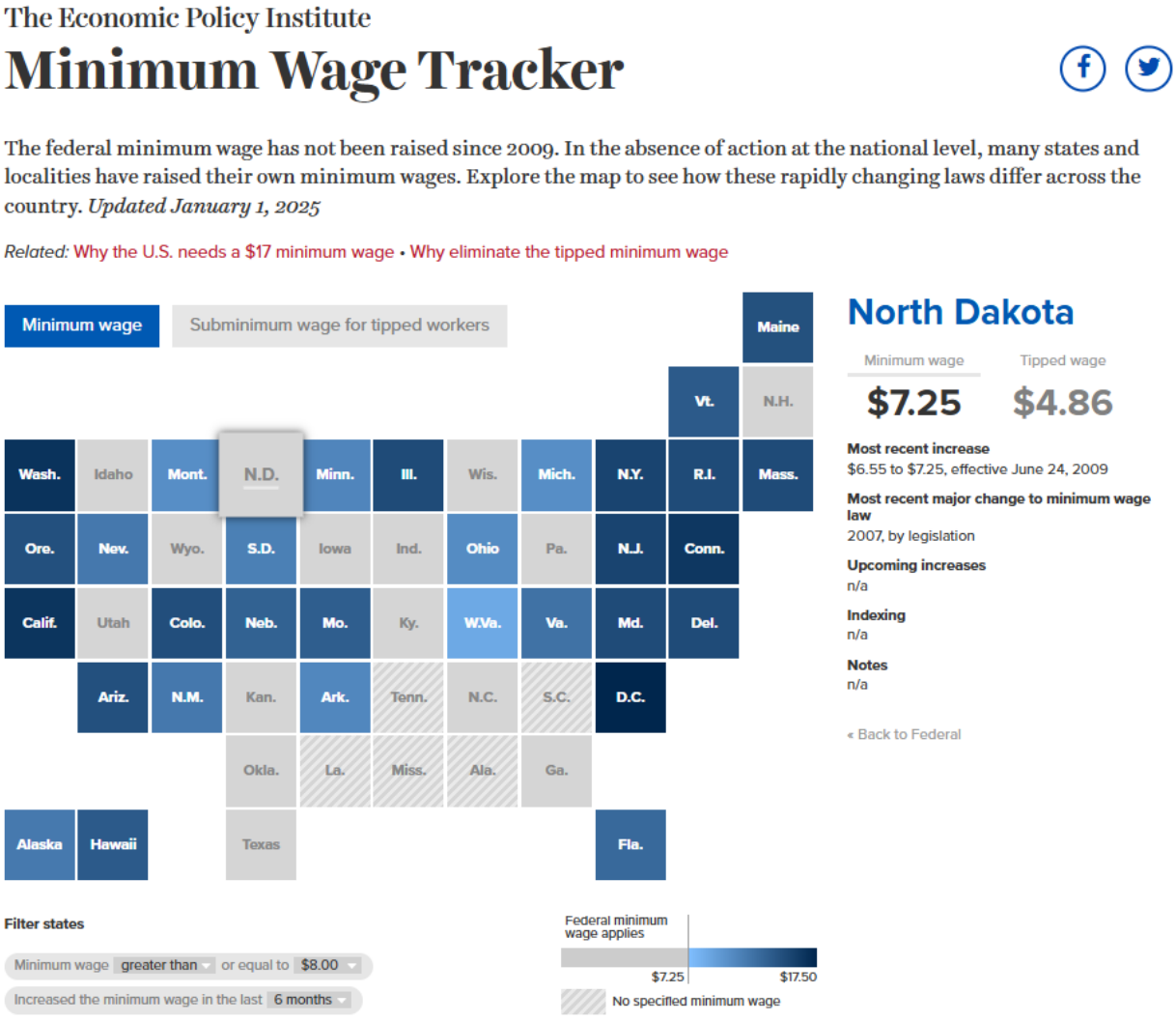
If North Dakota is serious about attracting and retaining a talented workforce, we would be setting our minimum wage to at least these levels. Rep Hagar's very conservative proposal of $9.25 per hour does not go far enough, in my humble opinion, but it is important to address this issue! And long-overdue!

The indexing contained in HCR 3032 is also important. At present, the federal minimum wage is NOT indexed, thus it has been stagnant for far too long, as noted by the Economic Policy Institute above. Every state surrounding North Dakota indexes their minimum wage level. North Dakota does not. This means that inaction on this issue will cause us to fall even FURTHER BEHIND our neighboring states.

It is interesting to note that the initial resistance to a minimum wage centered on the idea that it would be disruptive to business operations. Again refencing the Economic Policy Institute in describing the initial passage of a minimum wage bill back in 1938:

> *"Opponents of the bill insisted that higher wages would cause labor cuts, but the administration fought back harder. In a fireside chat discussing the bill, President Roosevelt said, "Do not let any calamity-howling executive with an income of $1,000 a day...tell you...that a wage of $11 a week is going to have a disastrous effect on all American industry." Incorrect statements from businesses opposing the minimum wage continue to the present day with assertions that minimum wage increases would cause businesses to close or reduce jobs. Studies demonstrate how these predictions did not come true."*

I urge you to support HCR 3032.



Representatives of the House Industry, Business and Labor Committee

Recommend a DO NOT PASS on HCR 3032

My name is Mike Connelly. I am a Bismarck resident and hold an elected position like yourselves, just at a local capacity, and want to thank you all for serving and being open to listening to the different perspectives of your constituents. I am speaking for my own perspective and in no official capacity of an entity or organization.

This seems like a completely unnecessary regulatory step forward when the checks and balances in the structure that capitalism functions in our great state of North Dakota appear to be working extremely well in this area. I personally do not know anyone, including youth under the age of 18 that make less than $10/hr. I also work in the medical field where we are desperately short of workers and will hire many who are willing to work starting at the age of 16 and up that make between $14 to $25/hr in several positions that do not even require a high school diploma to work. I have kids that work in restaurants making between $15 and $17/hr. All these places that I know of are looking for help and it comes down to a willingness to work. If there is a plethora of work available at much higher minimums than the lower amount this bill is proposing, it makes no sense to set an arbitrary bar for anything higher than the current system.

Arbitrarily raising minimum wage just creates a compression within the workforce by raising the bar of seemingly less vital job choices in a way that may drive others from choosing more vital jobs such as caregivers in the medical field, most of which are funded by the government. I am currently working at a facility where several people left to work in basic care making about $5/hr less than they do in a higher expectation area of care. Creating less discrepancy between minimums will only succeed in higher costs for everyone as businesses adjust their costs to get their own piece of the competitive pie, whilst empowering people to work in easier jobs, versus vital jobs that a community needs to remain healthy and thriving.

Again, I recommend a DO NOT PASS on HCR 3032, thank you for you time.

House Industry, Business, & Labor Committee

House Concurrent Resolution 3032

Andrew Alexis Varvel

March 5, 2025

9:00AM

327C

Chairman Warrey & Members of the Committee:

My name is Andrew Alexis Varvel.

I live in Bismarck. I represent myself, and myself only.

House Concurrent Resolution 3032 makes sense.

For over a decade, business owners in North Dakota have been complaining about a shortage of employees.

House Concurrent Resolution 3032 helps solve this problem by not only putting more money into the pockets of workers, but also by showing workers that they are valued by our society. A higher minimum wage would attract more people to not only work at minimum wage jobs, but also “monkey branch” to higher paying jobs that demand greater skills. We need to get more people here!

House Concurrent Resolution 3032 also includes an automatic cost of living adjustment to North Dakota's wage structure which would allow our state to become competitive for attracting workers.

Businesses concerned about raising the cost of employment should please note that if this constitutional amendment gets passed by the voters of North Dakota at the 2026 general election, our state would still lag behind the minimum wages of surrounding states.

By over a dollar.

Keeping our minimum wage down would push workers away.

The people of North Dakota deserve to have a chance to vote on this proposed constitutional amendment, up or down. If the people don't like it, the people should have an opportunity to say so. If the people do like it, the people should have an opportunity to say so.

Either way, please give House Concurrent Resolution a **DO PASS** recommendation so we, as the voters of North Dakota, can make our own decision on this important and momentous matter.

Thank you.

I am open for questions from the committee.

I'm sure many of the other testimonies will talk about how we need to raise the minimum wage. Some will probably correctly point out that if wages kept pace with productivity, minimum wage would be closer to $30 than $10. Others will probably note how some state agencies can only pay the minimum wage, and everyone, and I mean everyone agrees that is too little of a wage.

But I want to highlight the cost of living adjustment part. While I unsuccessfully campaigned for the State House this last year, a common refrain I heard from working people is that the cost of living increases from inflation where eating away at their spending power and subsequently any capability of doing anything other than subsiding. Adding a cost of living adjustment to the minimum wage is a direct response to this issue. Instead of squabbling over which exact dollar amount, and when and how frequently we should increase the minimum wage, this bill would create an automatic adjustment based on cost of living calculations. This will depoliticize the issue while delivering a modest but reliable win for the lowest waged laborers in our state.

This is a measured and fair proposal, and it is in the best interest of everyone in the state for it to be passed.

Will Thompson

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March 5, 2025

Testimony in support of HCR 3032

Our students and impoverished families are struggling. Without a set amount of pay by the hour, it becomes extremely difficult to live in this state. On behalf of SFLA I will outline 2 reasons why we urge a do pass.

1. Increased ecnomic participation and population. The set federal Minimum wage is 7.25 and of course other states can make their own. It just has to be higher than 7.25. We need to do the same. Imagine the possibilities. In a state like North Dakota, raising the minimum wage could prove crucial to living in this state. Not to mention the enhanced participation in the economy and sale of goods. This is another way to strengthen our communities to be Legendary! For our kids. So they can grow up in a good situation economically. No job should be allowed to pay so little.
2. Student jobs. When children work, they use that money for fun times, education, and much more. By increasing the minimum wage you'll help kids who work hourly paid jobs. The same kids who want to go to college, have enough funds for nationals, or get out in the world and participate. You're enhancing the youth and their education while giving them more opportunities. This will help put North Dakota in a better position to truly shine. It will help our youth change this state by getting their savings accounts ready for college. Finally, it will protect their opportunities. No one should have to drop out of a National Tournament because they cant pay. This is a real problem. We urge you to help!

We need to enhance this state and set our future. This is a worth while investment. The sponsor of this legislation is giving you that chance. So lets do it! If you have any questions please contact me. SFLA urges a Do Pass recommendation on this legislation. Thank you for all your hard work.

Carter Hass, President of Students For Legislative Action.

"This generation must have a voice"

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Industry, Business and Labor Committee
Room JW327C, State Capitol

HCR 3032
3/5/2025

A concurrent resolution to create and enact a new section to article XI of the Constitution of North Dakota, relating to the minimum wage.

3:50 p.m. Chairman Warrey opened the meeting.

Members Present: Chairman Warrey, Vice Chairman Ostlie, Vice Chairman Johnson, Representatives Finley-DeVille, Grindberg, Johnson, Kasper, Koppelman, Ruby, Schatz, Schauer, Vollmer

Members Absent: Representatives Bahl, Brown

Discussion Topics:

- Entry level positions
- Food Services
- Temporary services
- Federal recommendation
- 19 states at $7.25

3:52 p.m. Representative Koppelman moved Do Not Pass.

3:52 p.m. Representative Kasper seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Jonathan Warrey	Y
Representative Mitch Ostlie	Y
Representative Jorin Johnson	Y
Representative Landon Bahl	AB
Representative Collette Brown	AB
Representative Lisa Finley-DeVille	Y
Representative Karen Grindberg	Y
Representative Jim Kasper	Y
Representative Ben Koppelman	Y
Representative Dan Ruby	Y
Representative Mike Schatz	Y
Representative Austin Schauer	Y
Representative Daniel R. Vollmer	Y

Motion passed 11-0-2

3:56 p.m. Representative Ostlie will carry the bill.

3:56 p.m. Chairman Warrey closed the meeting

Diane Lillis, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
HCR 3032 (25.3070.01000)

Industry, Business and Labor Committee (Rep. Warrey, Chairman) recommends **DO NOT PASS** (11 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 2 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). HCR 3032 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.