

My name is Zach Raknerud, I am a resident of Minot, North Dakota. I am testifying today in support of HB1341. I am testifying today because it is important that we recognize the importance that anyone who works in this nation deserves to have a decent standard of living. The minimum wage has not been adjusted in nearly 13 years. Even in a state as rural as ours, a minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour is simply not enough.

It is important that we ensure that the dignity of work is preserved in this nation. Anyone who commits their time and services deserves to have a wage that provides dignity. We cannot lose sight of that. I urge this committee to take this issue seriously. It may take some work to reach a final solution, but updates to the minimum wage need to be made.

There must be safeguards put in place to ensure that working North Dakotans are receiving adequate compensation for their work. This bill provides a good first step to addressing such an important issue. We cannot sit back as large profitable corporations are paying North Dakotans too little to survive while asking taxpayers to pick up the tab in public assistance.

We can take steps to ensure that a minimum wage protects those who need it while providing nuance for specific situations. Minimum wage law does not have to be a blanket covering everything. There are exemptions laid out in laws today for small business, those can continue to exist. But, it is important that we understand that there are large businesses taking advantage of the low minimum wage today.

I speak here today to urge this committee to take the necessary steps to ensure that we protect workers in North Dakota. This issue is tied directly to the fundamental rights each of us are entitled to. Economic strains are linked to a plethora of societal consequences. For each dollar that the minimum wage is raised from \$7.25, there is an estimated 2% decrease in infant mortality, as one example.

This issue is tied to so many others and is key to building a better future for working North Dakotans. I thank the committee for their time and humbly request their support for HB1341.