

Testimony of Landis Larson, ND AFL-CIO President
In Support of HB 1507
January 30, 2023

Chairperson Louser and members of House Industry, Business and Labor:

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 support of House Bill 1507.

According to the North Dakota Labor Market Indicators “Cost of Living” calculator, the lowest amount of money a single North Dakota worker could make and support themselves at the most basic level is \$25,370. If this worker is working full time at 40 hours per week, that means they need to make at least \$13.21 per hour to survive without outside assistance. In Rolette County, with the lowest cost of living in the state, this same worker would need to make \$20,384 per year or work 40 hours at \$10.61 per hour to make ends meet. In McKenzie County, the highest cost of living, this worker would need to make \$31,305 a year or \$16.30 per hour. Statewide, if this worker has a child, they would need to make \$45,733 per year or \$23 per hour to sustain themselves and their family of two. Clearly a living wage is much higher than our minimum wage. If we are serious about workforce development, we can’t have jobs that are paying these poverty level wages and expect anyone to fill them.

The current minimum wage of \$7.25 was set in 2008 and is not indexed to inflation, requiring action from the legislature to increase it. This is far too low for any job that is worth doing.

Wages will not be going back down to these levels and we should raise the minimum wage and index it to inflation to keep up with our neighboring states and a large majority of the rest of the country and to ensure that any employers in North Dakota are paying a wage that is at least closer to a livable wage that \$7.25

- Minnesota has a minimum wage of \$10.59 per hour and is indexed to inflation.
- South Dakota has a minimum wage of 10.80 per hour and is indexed to inflation.
- Montana has a minimum wage of \$9.95 per hour and is indexed to inflation.
- Manitoba has a minimum wage of \$10.14 per hour and is indexed to inflation.

Lastly, we think that this bill should be amended to also prohibit any industry or employer from paying subminimum wages, such as for tipped employees.

The North Dakota AFL-CIO supports House Bill 1507.