

Latino Community Session Summary

January 24, 2017

General comments:

- We shouldn't build a city on poverty wages.
- If the minimum wage is raised to \$15 an hour, we'll help single mothers by giving them roughly \$800 extra a month.
- Managers will not give employees enough hours so employees are forced to get a second job. Raising the minimum wage would improve the quality of life for workers and would allow workers to have an easier time getting the hours and wages they need.
- It's not fair to have to work two jobs to earn what is needed to pay your mortgage. Increasing the minimum wage would allow workers more flexibility to pay their bills and meet their basic needs.
- Businesses are struggling to find workers to work at current minimum wage and some business owners don't have control over what they're able to pay their workers.
- When someone opens a business, they know that they need to have certain income/revenue to sustain the business. If I can't pay what it takes people to live on, I'm asking them to invest in my business without them receiving a return. Raising the minimum wage would also have a positive impact in that more people would have money to buy the goods sold in my business.
- As a woman, I have to endure people saying uncomfortable things to me because I rely on my tips. Tipped workers should earn a fair minimum wage and not be penalized for earning tips.
- People support raising the minimum wage, but there is always an inequality when it comes to tipped employees vs. those that don't receive tips. Unlike Europe, tips are a common thing in the US and you can't take away tips. There needs to be a wage balance for back of house staff and the front of house/servers. If servers are paid \$15 an hour plus tips then the back of house staff would need to be paid more than \$15 an hour. For the restaurant industry, most cooks work full-time and the business pays for their health insurance. If the minimum wage goes up they would have to either cut front of house

staff or raise prices (which wouldn't work) to factor in full time employees who receive health insurance.

- I hear from workers every day that they don't earn good wages and have to work two jobs. Those jobs don't support their families. They also have hard feelings in the sense that they have to hold two jobs and have to leave their kids home alone or they need to be taken care of by other people. Their children also complain because they are on the streets hanging out because there is no one at home to take care of them. Their kids, after going to school, also have to go to work to help supplement household income. There are also some employers who are stealing wages from their workers. One of the ways they do this is when workers work a 12 hour day and they pay them for 8 hours of work with a check and the remaining 4 hours are paid with cash. I supporting \$15 an hour so people can survive.
- I am a Latina, an immigrant, a fighter like you. We come here to raise our families and deserve a wage that is respectful. But many of the businesses on Lake Street worry that we aren't able to cover payroll with the current wage levels so how will they cover them if the minimum wage is raised? We won't be able to make payroll. Businesses are not only competing with minimum wage, but also competing with larger businesses (Aldi, Target, etc.) - why is it only Minneapolis that is fighting to raise the minimum wage? Our prices are going to go up and we have a lot of competition. We are already seeing the prices of produce go up and it'll only get worse with an increase in minimum wage.
- Those that support an increased minimum wage will continue to fight beyond Minneapolis for an increased minimum wage.
- Right now the price of food is high so if the minimum wage goes up, the price of rent and other things will also go up.
- I really believe that this proposal to raise the wage will destroy some of our businesses. If you raise the min wage to \$15 an hour you will make small businesses compete with larger businesses that can pay higher wages because they pay less for their products. Larger businesses also benefit from bulk purchasing and sales. If the wage passes, it will be like survival of the fittest. The benefits and the impact of an increased minimum wage need to be considered. The income of each business, and whether they can even afford to pay an increased wage, should be considered.

- Small businesses have every right to support themselves as well. There should be support in place for both businesses and workers. I depend on income, which includes tips, and even with an increased minimum wage it wouldn't be enough. Wages aren't meeting basic needs.
- We shouldn't pit businesses against workers in this discussion.
- If wages are raised to \$15 an hour and someone lives outside of Minneapolis, it creates unfair competition between workers that live in Minneapolis and those that live in surrounding areas.
- The study commissioned by the City showed raising the minimum wage would have a minimal impact on businesses in the city.
- We need to look at study that was commissioned to see what will actually happen, but also look at what's happened in other cities that have raised minimum wage. There hasn't been significant business loss. We have also seen states that have cities that raised the minimum wage followed suit.
- It's hard to have all aspects of life when your wage is so small. Coworkers need to work longer hours to earn a living and have seen that it has had a destabilizing impact on the community. There is a movement to get a statewide minimum wage increase passed. More money in workers pockets will translate into businesses doing better. That's a reason why some people would like to see the wage increase put on big business first and have smaller businesses increase wages in a longer phased approach.
- Has anyone in the City run a business? Probably not. I do and I can't support a minimum wage increase – I can barely make a living as it is with my restaurant.

Comments in response to what considerations the City should take into account if moving forward on a minimum wage policy:

- The amount of the increase is a trick question. The only way to get out of the trap is to offer benefits to the small businesses so they can offer higher wages to workers.
- There should be more support for businesses so that this can pass and support both workers and businesses alike.