

Consider the Source

100 Years of Broken-Record Opposition to the Minimum Wage

National Employment Law Project / Cry Wolf Project
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For more than 40 years, the National Employment Law Project has sought to ensure that work is an anchor of economic security and a ladder of opportunity for all working families. In partnership with national, state, and local allies, NELP promotes policies and programs that create good jobs, strengthen upward mobility, enforce hard-won workplace rights, and help unemployed workers regain their footing. To learn more about NELP, visit www.nelp.org



About Cry Wolf Project

The Cry Wolf Project is a network of advocates, researchers and scholars dedicated to demonstrating that, in fact, conservatives and business groups are only “crying wolf” to delay, prevent and weaken important and common sense regulations that save lives, clean our environment and make our families more secure. To learn more about Cry Wolf Project, visit www.crywolfproject.org

Introduction

“The arguments raised against establishing any legal minimum wage were the same as those which have been used by employers over the past 50 years. “The proposed 50-cent minimum wage would be a ‘socialistic toehold’ toward a higher minimum. It would ruin many small businesses. The State would be taking over and running free enterprise.”

I always believe that, in a democracy, it is the obligation of the Government to give its citizens the protection and care they need for the benefit of the individual, the family, and the Nation as a whole.”

*~ Eleanor Roosevelt
Congressional testimony, 1959*

In her Congressional testimony from 1959, Eleanor Roosevelt noted the repetitive quality of objections raised by minimum wage opponents over the previous five decades. More than 50 years later, it appears that nothing has changed.

This report documents the rhetorical onslaught launched by minimum wage opponents over the past 100 years. Rather than approaching these claims at face value, we step back and review how minimum wage opponents have presented their case through roughly a century’s worth of public statements, congressional testimonies, editorials, media interviews, and other public records, devoting a critical eye to the trajectory of these criticisms over time.

Our investigation yields two main findings:

- The criticisms raised by minimum wage opponents display a remarkable consistency over the past 100 years – indeed, it appears that the unfolding of nearly a century’s worth of significant economic and political change in the United States has done almost nothing to inform or alter the objections raised by those opposed to the minimum wage.
- Second, throughout the decades of opposition to the minimum wage, three distinct themes persistently reappear in the criticisms of minimum wage opponents:

1. *Raising the minimum wage would impair the economy;*

“In fact, the impact of minimum wage usually is that businesses hire less people... We have a lot of history to prove that the minimum wage, raising the minimum wage does not grow the middle class.”

~ Sen. Marco Rubio, 2013

2. *A higher minimum wage would ultimately harm the very workers it is intended to help;*

“Look, I wish we could just pass a law saying everybody should make more money without any adverse consequences. The problem is you’re costing jobs from those who are just trying to get entry level job.”

~ Rep. Paul Ryan, 2013

3. *The minimum wage violates America’s commitment to freedom and liberty.*

“Mr. Speaker, in America, we can either have maximum opportunity or we can have minimum wages. We cannot have both.”

~ Rep. Jeb Hensarling, 2007

This report suggests that, in their dogged monotony, the criticisms raised by minimum wage opponents may amount to little more than articles of faith repeated by the adherents of a stubborn ideology and expressed without reflection on the prevailing economic or political conditions.

If it is true that minimum wage opponents have been motivated in large part by ideological commitments, then it could explain why they have repeatedly claimed to oppose the minimum wage in the interest of protecting low-wage, minority, or young adult workers, even as these very workers consistently express high levels of support for raising the minimum wage.

Ideological rigidity may also explain why these critics have consistently feared the onset of socialist or other anti-democratic political change as a consequence of higher minimum wages, regardless of what the historical record makes clear about the basic integrity of America's economic system.

Given the sheer number of corporate interests and industry advocates that number among the cast of minimum wage opponents, it remains well within the realm of possibility that simple self-interest could lie behind this decades-long opposition. In their alarmist tone, the criticisms raised by minimum wage opponents may reflect a cynical attempt to delay or obstruct the implementation of minimum wage legislation by appealing to widely held anxieties about job loss and economic stagnation.

To our knowledge, this is the first study to specifically examine in detail the rhetorical trajectory of opposition to the minimum wage in the United States; for reference, the appendix contains a full, chronological listing of the public statements we examine in this report. While this report does not exhaustively chronicle every critical comment made in opposition to the minimum wage, we believe our research represents a fair survey of the statements and objections that have been expressed about minimum wage legislation by the opposition's leading voices over the last 100 years.

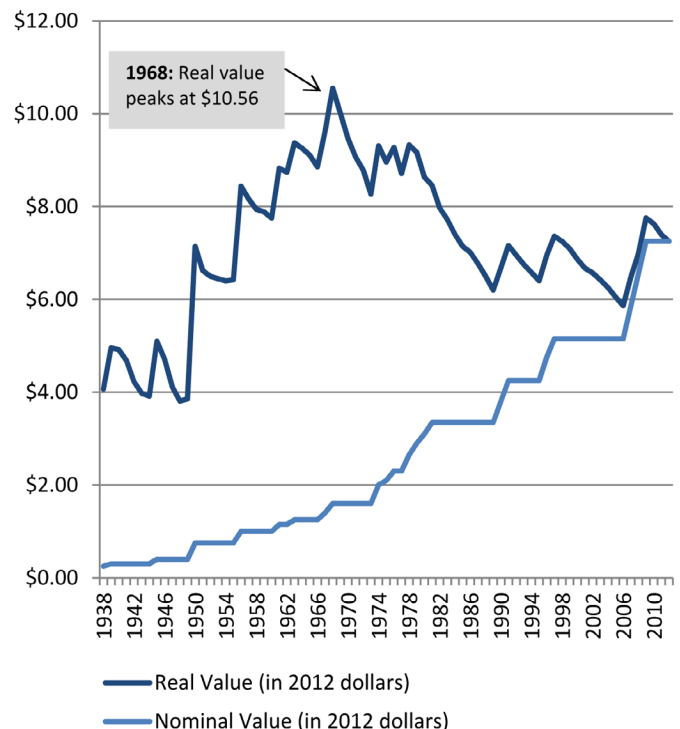
Finally, while many of the statements documented in this report sound extreme or exaggerated, that is not

because our review of opposition arguments is confined to a narrow look at the most inflated rhetoric. Instead, our review of an expansive documentary archive focusing overwhelmingly on statements from prominent conservative political figures and well-known industry advocates reveals that alarmist rhetoric appears consistently throughout the historical record.

Brief History of the Federal Minimum Wage

The first minimum wage law in the United States was established in 1912 in the state of Massachusetts. Several states would follow suit over the next two decades, and, in 1938 – at the height of the Great Depression – Congress established the first federal minimum wage as part of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Its stated purpose was to keep America's workers out of poverty and to increase consumer purchasing power in order to stimulate the economy.

Figure 1. Nominal Value vs. Real Value of the Federal Minimum Wage, 1938-2012



Source: National Employment Law Project analysis of Consumer Price Index (CPI-U)

Since there is no automatic cost of living adjustment for the minimum wage, Congress must act in order for the wage floor to maintain its real value over time. As Figure 1 shows, the real value of the minimum wage rose fairly steadily from the time of its creation in 1938 until the late 1960s; throughout this time, Congress diligently approved regular increases in the minimum wage, protecting the wage floor from erosion by the rising cost of living.

Beginning in the 1970s, federal policymakers would abandon their role as stewards of the minimum wage. A record-setting nine years would pass between 1981 and 1990 without any increase in the minimum wage – a record that would ultimately be broken by a 10-year period from 1997 to 2007 without any increase. The consequences of this inaction were steep: from 1981 to 2007, the minimum wage lost over 32 percent of its purchasing power.¹

Opponents do not have to force a repeal of the minimum wage in order to weaken it: by simply delaying any action to raise the minimum wage, the real value of this labor standard will gradually erode over time. Ten states throughout the U.S. have addressed this problem by indexing their minimum wage rates to automatically adjust each year with the rising cost of living.² Until Congress raises the minimum wage and indexes it to rise with the cost of living, the federal minimum wage will remain vulnerable to the inconsistent attention of the legislative process.

The legislative history of the minimum wage has unfolded against a backdrop of intense opposition from business leaders, industry representatives, and conservative elected officials. In the remainder of this paper, we focus on that opposition, documenting the course it has taken over time and reflecting on the significance of its consistency in the face of ever-changing economic and political conditions in the United States.

Claim: Raising the minimum wage would impair the economy

The record of opposition to the minimum wage is replete with predictions of job loss and economic contraction in response to higher wages. From the very beginning, opponents of the FLSA argued that the establishment of basic labor standards like the minimum wage would fundamentally weaken the American economy.

1937

“Rome, 2,000 years ago, fell because the government began fixing the prices of services and commodities. We, however, know what has always happened when governments have tried to superintend the industry of private persons. The final result has always been distress, misery and despair.”

~ Gary Harrington, National Publishers Association

Once the minimum wage was established, critics almost immediately pivoted to opposing any future increase in

the wage floor, citing the very same predictions of job loss and economic contraction.

1945

“[T]he proposed jump from an hourly minimum of 40 to 65 cents at once and 70 and 75 cents in the following years is a reckless jolt to the economic system. Living standards, instead of being improved, would fall – probably to record lows.”

~ Reuben S. Haslam, National Association of Manufacturers

Over the subsequent seven decades, the minimum wage would rise over two dozen times, and yet nearly identical predictions of job loss and economic contraction – without regard or reference to the effects of earlier increases – continue to the present day:

1980

“The minimum wage has caused more misery and unemployment than anything since the Great Depression”

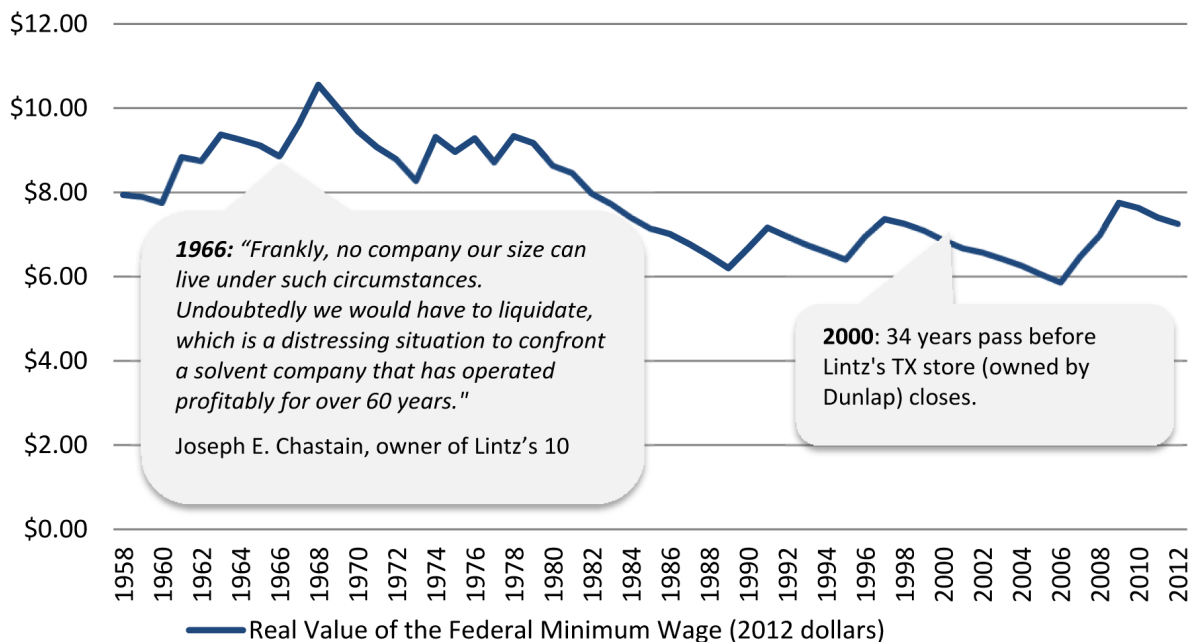
~ Gov. Ronald Reagan, Candidate for President of the United States

The appendix contains dozens of nearly identical quotations, revealing how warnings of higher unemployment and a weakened economy appear consistently throughout the history of opposition to the minimum wage. From today’s perspective, it’s perhaps not surprising to see the early minimum wage opponents cite concerns over “fixing the prices of services and commodities” – at this point in time, there was little labor market regulation and the discipline of economics was still largely informed by the theories of early classical economists, whose conception of the free market focused narrowly on the dynamics of transactions between private entities, ignoring to a large extent the capacity for public interventions to promote more positive economic outcomes. It is noteworthy, however, that this rudimentary nineteenth-century economic perspective continues

to inform the criticisms of minimum wage opponents to the present day, particularly given the emergence of more sophisticated academic research on the minimum wage providing a complex and nuanced understanding of its effects.³ It appears that, even as our understanding of the economy has evolved and improved over several decades, the convictions of minimum wage opponents have remained unchanged.

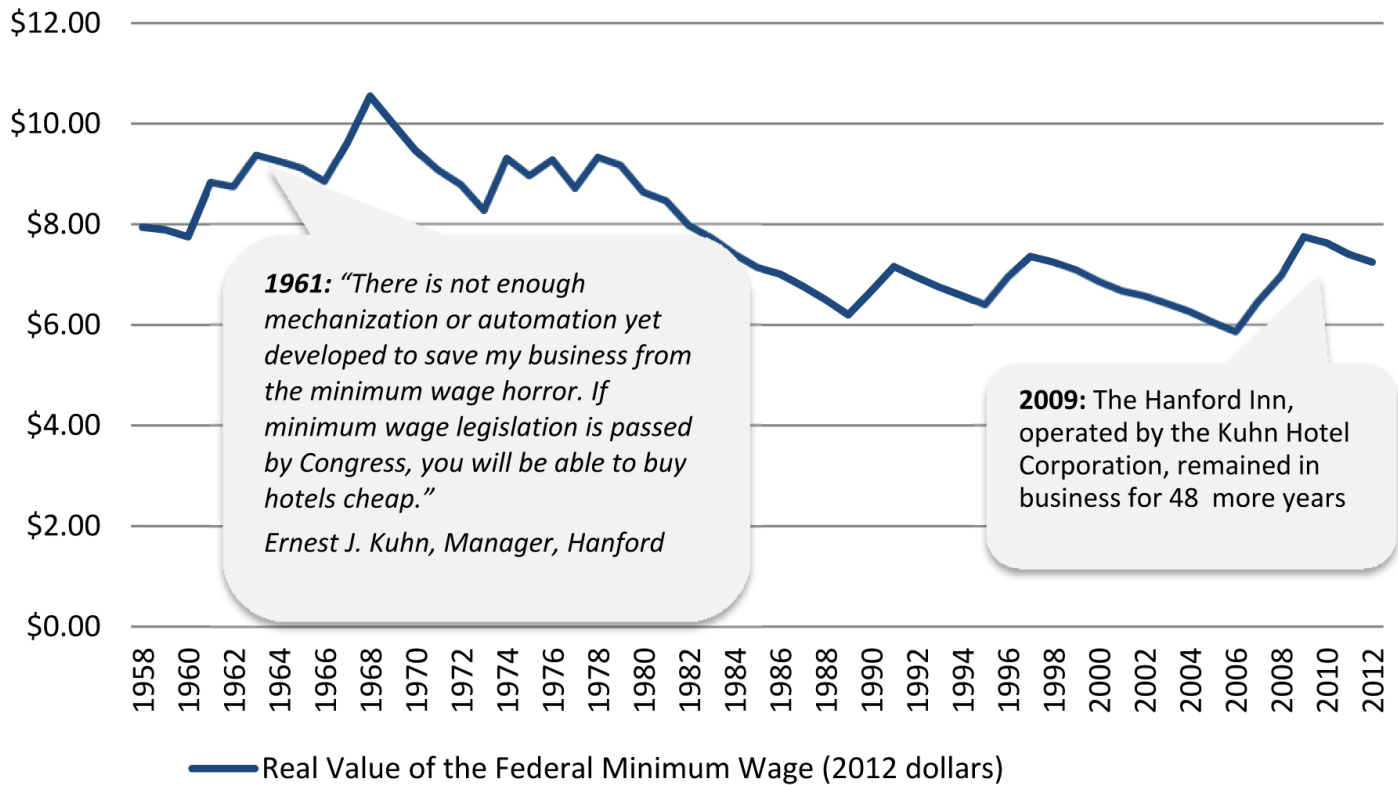
The objections of minimum wage opponents are not limited to sweeping concerns over job loss and economic decline; the historical record also contains multiple examples of individual business leaders and industry representatives issuing highly specific warnings that any increase in the minimum wage will force them to cut their payrolls. In Figure 2 below, a hotel manager personally attests to the hardship that a higher minimum wage would cause his business; he suggests that, given the labor-intensive nature of his business and the hotel industry more broadly, a minimum wage increase would make it impossible for him to remain open. Figure 3 on the following page reveals a similar story featuring a business leader in a low-wage industry (in this case, retail) arguing that higher wages will force the laying off of workers.

Figure 2. Empty Threats: Businesses Remain Open Regardless of the Real Value of the Federal Minimum Wage



Source: “Dunlap Stores,” Financial Profiles, University of Wisconsin, Information Retrieved September 6, 2012

Figure 3. Empty Threats: Businesses Remain Open Regardless of the Real Value of the Federal Minimum Wage



Source: Joe Buttweiler, "Mason City's Hanford Inn Is Closing," The Globe Gazette, November 1, 2009.

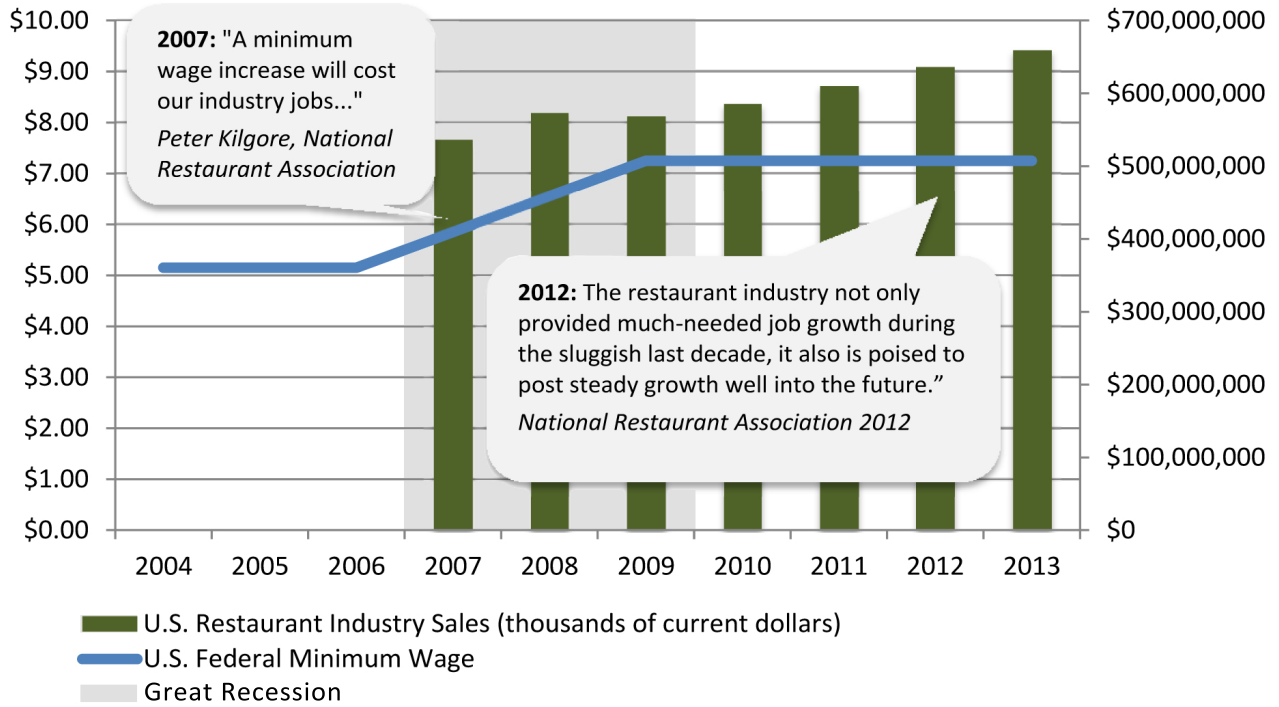
History ultimately proved these pessimistic predictions wrong. While the Hanford Inn and Lintz's Department Stores (Figure 2 and Figure 3) both eventually closed, their doors would remain open for roughly another 40 years after their executives first threatened closure. And while some opponents may suggest that these businesses suffered a "slow drain" fueled by the periodic minimum wage increases over this time, the record shows that the minimum wage was actually lower in real terms at the time of their closing than when their executives first threatened to cut their payrolls.

The National Restaurant Association (NRA) perhaps best exemplifies the salience of the job loss claim among minimum wage opponents. The NRA and its state-based affiliates have a long record of opposing minimum wage increases on the basis that higher wages will reduce job growth – yet, even as the NRA publicly expresses anxiety about the strength of its industry, its own internal forecasts reveal a strong sense of optimism about the employment growth prospects

of the restaurant industry (see Figures 4 and 5 below). These forecasts clearly indicate that restaurant employment continued growing after the 2007-2009 federal minimum wage increase, despite NRA's public guarantees that "significant" job loss would occur as a result.

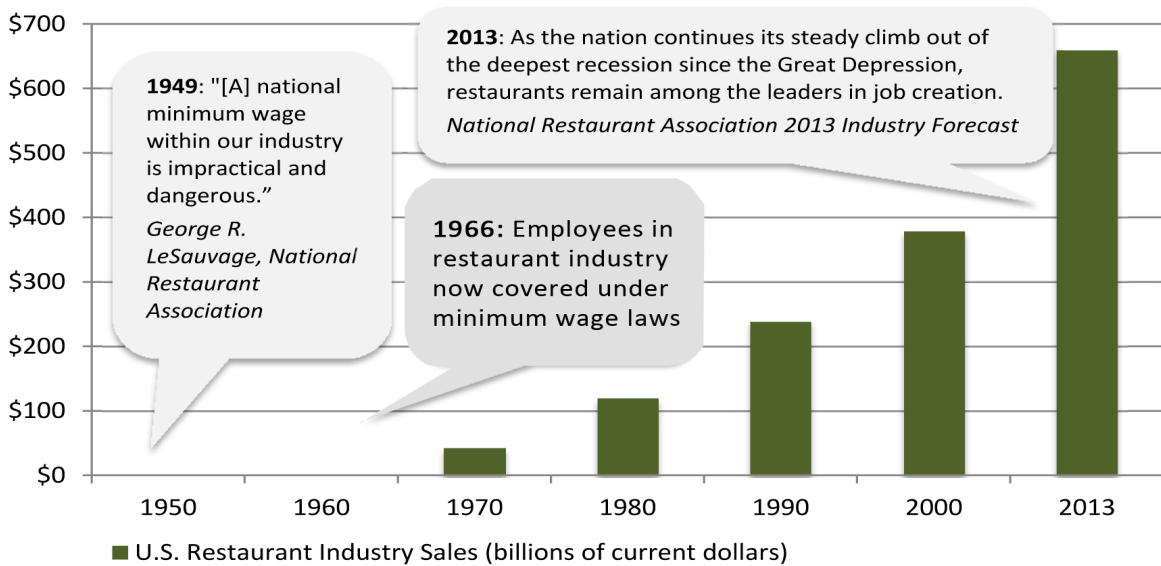
A confusing quality marks the history of those claims insisting that minimum wage increases will cause job loss and economic contraction: While Congress has raised the minimum wage dozens of times over the last 70 years, and while the discipline of economics has witnessed nothing short of a sea change in its understanding of the effects of minimum wage increases, those opposed to the minimum wage have nevertheless continued to repeat with religious certainty a basic conviction that a higher wage floor must produce higher unemployment or reduce economic growth.

Figure 4. False Alarm: Restaurant Industry Continues to Thrive After Federal Minimum Wage Increase



Source: 2007, 2012, and 2013 Restaurant Industry Forecasts, National Restaurant Association

Figure 5. False Alarm: National Restaurant Association Threatens Industry Collapse due to Minimum Wage Increases



Source: 2013 Restaurant Industry Forecast, National Restaurant Association, January 2013

Claim: Raising the minimum wage harms the very workers it intends to help

Another paradox is evident in the historical record of opposition to the minimum wage: Many of the policy's most fervent opponents couch their opposition in concerns for the welfare of low-wage workers. There is an extensive record of minimum wage critics, especially elected officials, justifying their opposition to the minimum wage as defenders of the interests of workers affected by this policy.

1996

“[The minimum wage] hurts exactly those workers it intends to help—the poor, the unskilled, and the young. Everyone wants to see income growth boost the economic well-being of the working poor, but throwing many of them out of work is not the solution.”

~ Rep. Jim Saxton (R-NJ),
Congressional Record

1989

“When the minimum wage goes up, the very people we say we want to help – the young, the unskilled, the disadvantaged – are the first people to get laid off.”

~ Rep. William Goodling (R-PA),
Congressional Record

1977

“...many of the industries and small businesses employing marginally trained or unskilled workers will be forced to cut back on the number of those employees or go out of business. The very worker that the Federal minimum wage was intended to aid will find himself out of work.”

~ Rep. Mickey Edwards (R-OK),
Congressional Floor Speech

1955

“I think the people who are proposing these things don't know what they are talking about. It means economic chaos for the very people they are trying to help.”

~ Senator Barry Goldwater (R-NJ), Congressional
Floor Speech

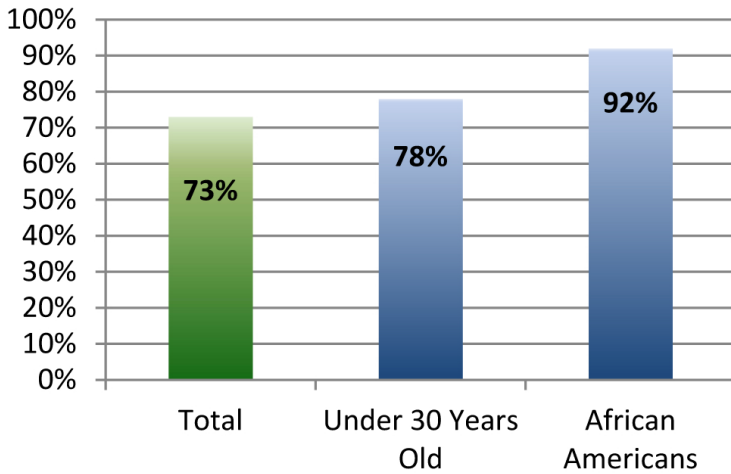
There is in fact a remarkable continuity, across several decades, of minimum wage opponents using nearly identical language to identify the alleged victims of minimum wage legislation as the very workers that the policy is intended to help – a position completely at odds with these very workers' views of the minimum wage.

As the charts reflect (on the following page), there is near-universal support among low-wage, young adult, and minority workers for raising the minimum wage. Indeed, as recent polling reveals, African Americans, young adults, and low-income workers consistently support proposals to raise the minimum wage at significantly higher rates than the population overall.⁴

As supposed representatives of the interests of low-wage workers, these minimum wage opponents remain strikingly unaware of the preferences of the constituency they claim to represent. Regardless, minimum wage opponents continue through the present day to insist that they oppose higher wages for low-paid workers in order to protect, allegedly, the economic security of precisely those same low-paid workers.

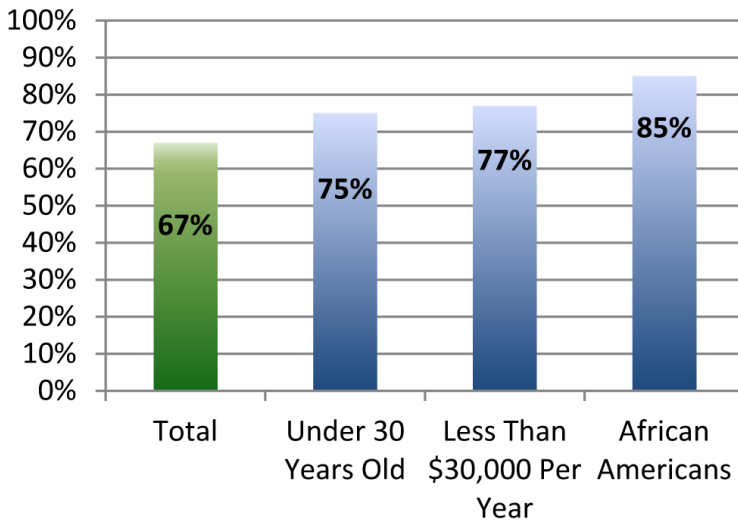
African American workers in particular figure prominently in the criticisms of minimum wage opponents. While Wall Street Journal editorial writer Jason Riley may appear extreme in suggesting that the NAACP, by virtue of its support for the minimum wage, “shows it-

2012: African American and Young Adult Support for Raising the Minimum Wage to \$10 by 2014



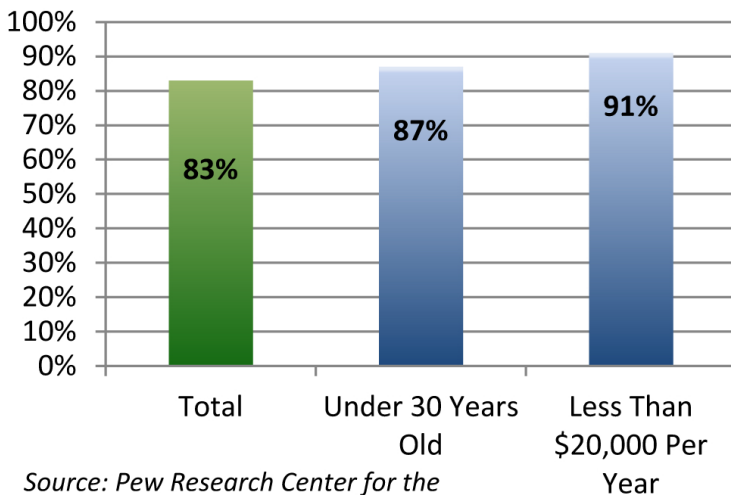
Source: Lake Research Partners, February 2012

2010: African American, Young Adult, and Lower-Income Support for Minimum Wage Increase to \$10 per Hour



Source: Public Religion Research Institute, 2010

2006: Young Adult and Lower-Income Worker Support for Raising the Minimum Wage to \$7.25 per Hour



Source: Pew Research Center for the

2012: "The NAACP supports minimum wage laws that study after study show disproportionately harm black workers, particularly younger black workers... Example after example after example, the NAACP shows itself to be more interested in promoting Democratic causes than necessarily supporting the interests of blacks."

Jason Riley, *Wall Street Journal* Editorial Board

2011: "[Repealing the minimum wage] would help the poor people who need jobs. Minimum wage is a mandate. We're against mandates so why should we have it? It would be very beneficial."

Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX), Presidential Candidate

2010: "Higher minimum wages, needless to say, are especially destructive for people with poor work skills and limited work experience. This is why young people and minorities tend to suffer most..."

Dan Mitchell, Senior Fellow, Cato Institute

2009: "Under-employment among young black males and low earnings among older black males are perennial problems explained in part by the minimum wage."

Art Carden, Adjunct Fellow, Independent Institute

self to be more interested in promoting Democratic causes than necessarily supporting the interests of blacks,” this statement is actually a representative example of the highly racialized rhetoric found in the criticisms expressed by minimum wage opponents over the past several decades.

1973

“I’ve often said that the minimum-wage rate is the most anti-Negro law on the books.”

~ Milton Friedman,
Playboy Magazine

1989

“Youth unemployment and black unemployment will drastically rise. It’s amazing to me that some black leaders want an increase in the minimum wage.”

~ Rep. Orrin Hatch (R-UT)
Congressional Record

1989

“When we pass minimum wage legislation it says one thing, Mr. Speaker: It says to the young black in the inner city, it says to the handicapped individual, it says to the young person looking for a first time job, unless you can meet a minimum standard, we will pass a law that says it is a violation of the Federal statute to hire such a person.”

~ Rep. Bob McEwem (R-OH)
Congressional Record

Again, given the consistently high levels of support that African American workers in particular have expressed for raising the minimum wage, it is confusing to see minimum wage opponents assert with such conviction that higher wages will actually hurt these very same workers.

Claim: Raising the minimum wage violates America’s commitment to Freedom

It is unclear exactly what many minimum wage opponents mean by the type of “freedom” they believe is under assault from policies like the minimum wage. It is clear, however, that even since before the passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act, opponents of the minimum wage have consistently expressed anxiety about the potential erosion of America’s fundamental commitments to liberty and freedom arising from implementation of basic labor standards.

1937

“[The Fair Labor Standards Act] constitutes a step in the direction of communism, bolshevism, fascism, and Nazism.”

~ The National Association of Manufacturers

1977

“The question of the minimum wage goes beyond the immediate problem. It strikes at a basic underpinning of our democratic system... Have we so soon forgotten that the American Revolution was fought in part because of such restrictions?”

~ Tom Hagedorn (R-MN),
Congressional Record

Critics frequently wield terms like “communism” and “socialism,” invoking ideological opponents from America’s history, in order to frame the minimum wage as an “enemy” policy that, by its very implementation, delivers a victory to anti-American forces.

1993

“The creeping socialism begins at the \$5.05 level.”

~ Eric Mund of Mega Management Corporation,
a New Jersey Burger King franchise

2006

“Economic freedom, not minimum-wage socialism, is the key to reducing poverty.”

~ James A. Dorn, Cato Institute

In many ways, it is difficult to critically evaluate these references to extreme ideologies and anti-American imagery in the history of opposition to the minimum wage: These statements are obviously not about empirical evidence or predicted economic effects of specific legislation – they are about ideology. We include them in this report because of the unavoidable fact that they appear pervasively throughout the historical record of opposition to the minimum wage, and they are often linked with the other arguments about job loss and negative effects on vulnerable workers. As far as our analysis, we believe the ideological comments speak for themselves as transparent attempts to frighten the public and delay the passage of minimum wage legislation. Coupled so often with the other repeat offender arguments, they serve to underscore that throughout the nation’s history, opposition to the minimum wage has been based more in ideology than economics.

If we were to engage these extreme ideological comments as sincere expressions of concern about the erosion of freedom in the U.S., we might start by reflecting on a distinctly American marker of freedom – middle class economic mobility – and its relationship to the minimum wage. Recent research reveals that middle class economic security has eroded significantly over the past several decades: Since 1979, the capacity of the economy to produce “good jobs” that support middle class economic security has declined by approximately 30 percent.⁵ At the same time, the cost of higher education and health insurance – two products long accepted as basic to a middle class standard of living – have skyrocketed, particularly with respect to the

value of the minimum wage. Since 1979, the number of hours that a minimum wage worker would have to work in order to afford a year of college tuition or a year of health insurance for a single family has increased by 500 percent and 600 percent respectively.⁶ In other words, from this limited snapshot alone, it appears that the freedom to achieve a middle class lifestyle has only been negatively impacted by the eroding real value of the minimum wage.

This paper examines three distinct claims raised by minimum wage opponents and, upon reflection, observes two confounding features to each claim. No matter the criticism – whether it’s concern over potential job loss, sensitivity to the welfare of low-wage workers, or anxiety over the prospect of American national decline – each line of argument advanced by minimum wage opponents appears strikingly tone deaf when set against the most obvious and relevant facts on the ground. Yet, while the criticisms offered by minimum wage opponents show no nuanced regard for their relationship to reality, they have nevertheless continued to resurface with unyielding persistence over the past seven decades.

Conclusion

After nearly a century, the U.S. continues to find itself in a debate over the role of labor standards like the minimum wage in determining the quality of jobs held by America's workers. Sustained opposition from industry advocates and conservative elected officials has succeeded in stalling federal action to preserve the purchasing power of the federal minimum wage over the past four decades. Regardless of whether the motivation for this opposition stems from ideological commitments or simple self-interest, it is obvious that minimum wage opponents have leveraged an unyielding rhetorical onslaught against the minimum wage to significantly weaken this labor standard today.

As the core of the U.S. economy shifts away from middle-wage manufacturing jobs toward low-wage service occupations, the potential for upward economic mobility in America will depend in large part on whether the federal government acts to improve the quality of the fastest-growing sectors in the labor market today. Policymakers will almost certainly hear from minimum wage opponents in the decades ahead – the question is whether to continue accepting these claims at face value, or to recognize their role as instruments of delay for the policies that America's workers urgently need.

APPENDIX

This appendix records the results of our archival research. The quotations are first sorted by theme (described in greater detail in the body of the paper above) and then listed chronologically. Web-based citations are provided where available.

Claim: Raising the minimum wage would impair the economy

1937

“It would seem that many people are not willing in these times to heed the object lessons of the past. What is herein stipulated has been tried many times and failed. Rome, 2,000 years ago, fell because the government began fixing the prices of services and commodities. We, however, know what has always happened when governments have tried to superintend the industry of private persons. The final result has always been distress, misery and despair.”

Guy Harrington, National Publishers Association. Congressional Record, June 11, 1937.

1938

“High hourly wages mean nothing to a worker if he has no job.”

C.C. Shephard, spokesman for Southern States Industrial Council. “Textile Wage Rise Opposed by Council,” New York Times, July 5, 1938. Available at: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=F40C1EF7345B11728DDDAF0894DF405B898FF1D3>

“Plants now working eight hours a day and four on Saturday are faced with a two-hour Saturday, usually not feasible; or else a continuance of the 44 hour week with overtime pay.”

U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Quoted in: “Chamber Assails Cut in Work Hours,” New York Times, October 21, 1938. Available at: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=FA0E15F83B5E10728DDDAB0A94D8415B898FF1D3>

1945

“[T]he proposed jump from an hourly minimum of 40 to 65 cents at once and 70 and 75 cents in the following years

is a reckless jolt to the economic system. Living standards, instead of being improved, would fall – probably to record lows.”

Reuben S. Haslam, National Association of Manufacturers. Congressional Hearing, Oct 22, 1945

1949

“Any temporary advantage to our 2,000,000 million employees would be more than offset by immediate unemployment within our industry. [A] national minimum wage within our industry is impractical and dangerous.”

George R. LeSavage, National Restaurant Association, Feb. 1949

Enactment of a seventy-five cent minimum wage would necessitate the selling of the cotton crop at an average price of 32 1/2 cents per pounds to cover the cost of labor alone. When the necessary cost of fertilizer, seeds, taxes, ginning, rent, etc., are figured in, the selling price would have to be 51 cents a pound... cotton could no longer even closely meet its competition pricewise, and the industry would be forced from the nation’s economic scene.

Harold Young, spokesman for National Cotton Council. Quoted in: “Wage Rise Opposed by Cotton Council,” New York Times, March 8, 1949. Available at: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=F30717FC3858177B93CAA91788D85F4D8485F9>

“[Minimum wages] serve as a protective tariff for Northern and Eastern industries to slow up industrialization of other sections – particularly the South.”

Earl M. McGowin, vice-president of W.T. Smith Lumber Company. Quoted in: “Lumber Man Hit Minimum Pay Bill,” New York Times, January 25, 1949. Available at: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=F30910FC345C177B93C7AB178AD85F4D8485F9>

1955

“The extension of Federal regulation to the small retailer, directly or indirectly, is the one final step that would bring about the complete regimentation of independent small business.”

R. J. Thompson, spokesman for the Pennsylvania Retailers Association, 1955.

“Imposition of a 1 dollar minimum wage, with more than double the impact of a 90 cent minimum wage, could have substantial unemployment effects.”

Emerson Schmidt, spokesman for U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Quoted in: “Raising the Wage Minimum,” New York Times, June 7, 1955. Available at: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=FA0E1EF7355E1A7493C5A9178DD85F418585F9>

“The entire motion-picture industry, even if our largest centers, is balanced so delicately on the knife-edge of survival or destruction that the smallest expense could throw the balance the wrong way.”

A. Julian Brylawski, vice-president of the Theatre Owners of America. Quoted in: “Employers Fight Wage Act Change,” New York Times, May 10, 1955. Available at: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=F40612FF3D5F107A93C3A8178ED85F428585F9>

“Increasing costs could have already compelled us to set a price on our room and food accommodations which is beyond the purse of some of our good citizens. If we were compelled to pay a minimum wage of \$1 an hour or more we would have to raise our rates to a level where a very large segment of the population could not afford to eat or sleep in a hotel.”

Arthur J. Packard, spokesman for the American Hotel Association. Quoted in: “Employers Fight Wage Act Change,” New York Times, May 10, 1955. Available at: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=F40612FF3D5F107A93C3A8178ED85F428585F9>

“[Small businesses] are likely to be hard hit by any legalistic and artificial general wage increase which would surely follow on the heels of any higher new minimum.”

Thomas O. Moore, spokesman for National Association of Manufacturers. Quoted in: “Eisenhower Urges Wage Law Spread,” New York Times, April 27, 1955. Available at: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=F40616F73E58107A93CAAB178FD85F418585F9>

“The real solution is to improve the real earnings of people and their ability to buy the things they want on the basis of increases in industry’s productive efficiency, better products at lower costs and prices, and all the other techniques of genuine economic progress.”

National Association of Manufacturers. Quoted in: “N.A.M. Attacks Spending Theory,” New York Times, May 25, 1955. Available at: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=F1071FF9355E1A7493C7AB178ED85F418585F9>

1956

“[Raising the minimum wage from \$1 to \$1.25 and later \$1.50] would saddle millions of small employers with regulations, bookkeeping and red tape.”

Nation’s Business, Magazine of US Chamber of Commerce, 1956

1961

“There is not enough mechanization or automation yet developed to save my business from the minimum wage horror. If minimum wage legislation is passed by Congress, you will be able to buy hotels cheap.”

Ernest J. Kuhn, Manager, Hanford Hotel, Mason City. Nation’s Business.

“There is reason to expect that the enactment of the Administration’s minimum wage bill would have an adverse effect upon both our unemployment and balance-of-payments problems.”

Hilton Davis, spokesman for U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Quoted in: “Wage Minimum Opposed,” New York Times, February 16, 1961. Available at: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=F70A12F63558147A93C4A81789D85F458685F9>

“You cannot take more money from a small business and give more to government and more to employees and increase our buying power... Also the inevitable price-level stimulation will absorb the employees extra take-home pay and send many retailers into the foreign market.”

Remmie L. Arnold, factory owner. Quoted in: “A Small Business and the Minimum Wage Bill,” New York Times, March 27, 1961. Available at: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=F60F15FD385912738DDDA10A94DB405B818AF1D3>

“When an employer is faced with rates he cannot economically pay, he must reduce the load of those rates by raising prices, by laying off workers and substituting machinery, or else go out of business.”

Robert T. Keeler, corporate lawyer. Quoted in: “Higher Wage Rate Opposed,” New York Times, March 7, 1960. Available at: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=F50A17FD355C16738DDDAE0894DB405B808AF1D3>

“If workers are underpaid, then their privilege to exercise their right of collective bargaining accorded under law should be put into effect.”

Senator Allen J. Ellenden (D-LA), 1961. Quoted in: “Kennedy

Plan Opposed,” New York Times, January 28, 1961. Available at:
<http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=FA0715FB34551B728DDDA00A94D9405B818AF1D3>
1966

“Frankly, no company our size can live under such circumstances. Undoubtedly we would have to liquidate, which is a distressing situation to confront a solvent company that has operated profitably for over 60 years. “

Joseph E. Chastain, owner of Lintz’s 10 department stores in Texas and Oklahoma. “Will Congress Kill Main Street,” Nation’s Business, 1966.

“Many workers who are unemployable in other industries and are now gainfully employed on farms will lose their jobs because their wages are less than the new levels will require. These are mostly workers who are paid piece rates, and they will now be unable to earn enough to continue to be employed.”

Charles B. Shuman, president of the American Farm Bureau Federation. Quoted in: Isadore Barmesh, “Price Rises Seen Result of Minimum Wage Increase,” New York Times, October 3, 1966. Available at:
<http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=F20617F63C58117B93C1A9178BD95F428685F9>

1974

“The employer who is faced with this increase in minimum wage will treat it simply as another Federal tax and will merely shift it on to the consumer. This legislation will raise all prices across the board and, in the long run, those people whom we are talking about helping will suffer most through higher prices and increased taxes.

The American people are being literally taxed to death and enactment of the legislation before us can only hasten their demise. Such gimmicks as use tax, sales tax, or minimum wage increases no longer fool the people. A tax is a tax, regardless of what it is called, and the only true beneficiary will be government at all levels through increase tax revenues.”

John Rarick (D-LA), Congressional Record, page H7328, March 20, 1974.

1975

“The consequences of minimum wage laws have been almost wholly bad, to increase unemployment and to increase poverty. In my opinion there is absolutely no positive objective achieved by minimum wages.”

Milton Freidman. Quoted in: “The Open Mind,” WPIX, Sunday, December 7, 1975. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ca8Z__o52sk
1977

“[I]f the minimum wage were increased to anywhere between the low of \$2.50 and the high of \$3.00, between 2 and 3.1 million jobs would be lost.”

Robert T. Thompson, U.S Chamber of Commerce.

“The estimated impact of the proposed increases in the minimum wage from \$2.30 to \$3.15 in three steps through January 1980 would lead to a national 1,977,000 job loss, and a 4.1 percent increase in labor costs.”

U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Quoted in: Thomas Rustici, “A Public Choice View of the Minimum Wage,” Cato Journal 5: 1977. Available at: <http://www.cato.org/pubs/journal/cj5n1/cj5n1-6.pdf>.

“This should be called the Unemployment Act of 1977. Some economists have contended that it will cost more than 1.8 million people their jobs.”

Representative John Rousselot (R-CA). Quoted in: “Congress Votes Minimum Wage Raise; It Would Aid 5 Million in January,” New York Times, October 20, 1977. Available at: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=F40B11FF3C5C167493C3AB178BD95F438785F9>

1979

“The increased minimum wage is a disaster to thousands of small husband-wife business whose owners are literally working themselves to death because they cannot afford the higher wage scale.”

U.S. Chamber of Commerce. “Minimum Wage Hike Maximizes Problems,” Nation’s Business, Feb. 1979

1980

“The minimum wage has caused more misery and unemployment than anything since the Great Depression.”

Ronald Reagan. Quoted in: “Nation: They’ve Got a Little List,” Time Magazine, September 1, 1980. Available at: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,922113,00.html>

1987

“A total of 1.9 million jobs would be lost nationwide over the next eight years.”
U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Quoted in: Nation’s Business, Sept 1987.

1987

“If Congress were to ignore this evidence and raise the minimum wage to the extent proposed by Biaggi, between 400,000 and 1,200,000 Americans could be made jobless.”

Bruce Bartlett. Quoted in: "How the Minimum Wage Destroys Jobs," Heritage Foundation, February 19, 1987. Available at: <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports/1987/02/How-the-Minimum-Wage-Destroys-Jobs>

1988

"In study after study, the minimum wage has been shown to be a job-killer."

"The minimum wage illusion," Colorado Springs Gazette editorial, September 20, 1988.

"A \$4.65 minimum wage is a much tougher constraint on a small town in Alabama with high unemployment than it is in New York City."

Edward Lazear. Quoted in: Michael Zuckoff, "New Minimum Wage Reopens Old Debate," Chicago Tribune, January 17, 1988. Available at: http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1988-01-17/business/8803230162_1_minimum-wage-coalition-minimum-wage-increase-fair-labor-standards-act/2

1989

"This would have severe adverse effects, and would mean as many as 700,000 job opportunities lost in the next three years and over a 1 percent increase in inflation."

Robert Martin, U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

"We say we're trying to help the working poor while we actually will be helping young part-time workers. There is one thing, however, upon which there is agreement. Economists from all persuasions agree that increasing the minimum wage will mean lost jobs and it will mean inflation."

Harris Fawell (R-IL), Congressional Record, Page E1719, May 16, 1989.

"The increase is expected to cost approximately 650,000 lost job opportunities."

Representative Tom Delay (R-TX), Congressional Record, 1989. Available at: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?r101:69:./temp/~r101jdhtgW>

1993

"No matter how you slice it, the minimum wage is a job-killer...The evidence is so clear that among serious economists the issue is not whether it reduces employment, but how much."

Thomas McClanahan. "Base pay hike too costly," Kansas City Star, August 20, 1993.

"You see a lot of stories that the economy is coming back but jobs aren't. Mandated benefits and high labor costs are at the heart of that. Employers are trying to find ways to deliver services and products with fewer workers."

Richard Berman. Quoted in: Sylvia Nasar, "High New Jersey Minimum Wage Doesn't Seem to Deter Fast-Food Hiring, Study Finds," New York Times, May 20, 1993. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/05/20/nyregion/high-new-jersey-minimum-wage-doesn-t-seem-to-deter-fast-food-hiring-study-finds.html?src=pm>

"As if economic growth and job creation will not be dampened enough by the largest tax hike in American history, the Clinton administration also has in mind a host of mandates that will raise the cost of employing workers. The new family leave law was just a start. The administration also wants to jack up the minimum wage and index it to inflation....his over-all economic game plan almost certainly is a job killer."

Joseph Perkins, "Pork and Dreams: How not to create jobs", San Diego Union Tribune, March 26, 1993.

1995

"[Clinton's minimum wage hike is] a regressive and job-killing scheme which will put a big dent in small-business hiring."

Jack Farris, National Federation of Independent Businesses. Quoted in: Michael Remez and Andrew Julian, "Debate Begins About the Effects of Raising the Minimum Wage," Hartford Courant, February 4, 1995. Available at: http://articles.courant.com/1995-01-29/news/9501290120_1_minimum-wage-wage-inflation-welfare-system

"Recent evidence suggests that minimum wage hikes undermine the welfare-to-work transition... This suggests that President Clinton's proposal to raise the minimum wage undercuts his goal of ending welfare as we know it."

Richard Berman of the Employment Policies Institute. "Balancing the Budget Isn't Like Your Checkbook," New York Times, January 22, 1995. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/01/22/opinion/1-balancing-the-budget-isn-t-like-your-checkbook-minimum-wage-434195.html?scp=5&sq=ric-hard+berman+minimum+wage&st=nyt>

1996

"Raising the minimum wage will take money out of the entrepreneur's pocket."

Robert Bobbitt Sr, vice-president of Pepsi-Cola in the Detroit area. Quoted in: Michael Winerip, "Minimum Wage? As One Man Finds, It's Really A Matter of Perspective," New York Times, May 10, 1996. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/05/10/us/minimum-wage-as-one-man-finds-it-s-really-a-matter-of-perspective.html>

"It comes down to this basic premise, and it is one of fairness: Do we empower all in this country to achieve all they can achieve; or would we have Government, through capricious action, tell those who create jobs, 'No, you are not entitled to create any more jobs; no, we are going to say to you we are going to penalize you for trying to create job opportunities, and instead it will be the Government who decides who giveth and, of course, the Government who, obviously, taketh away,' with historic tax increases from this liberal side of the aisle and their liberal friends at the end of Pennsylvania Avenue."

Representative J.D. Hayworth (R-AZ), Congressional Record. Available at: [http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/B?r104:@FIELD\(FLD003+h\)+@FIELD\(DDATE+19960522\)](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/B?r104:@FIELD(FLD003+h)+@FIELD(DDATE+19960522))

1998

Jeremy Ross, manager of Ozzie's, a Lower Queen Anne diner, said if the minimum wage goes up, so will his prices. "If the minimum wage goes up with inflation, it also will cause inflation," Ross said. "It's like the Blob - it gets bigger and bigger."

Penhale, Ed. 1998. "Minimum Pay Scale a Volatile Vote Issue Would Hike State Hourly Rate in Stages." *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. Septmeber 29. Page B-1.

2003

"The other West Coast states, with wage mandates far above the federal minimum, similarly have unemployment rates higher than the national average. Most economic models predict this outcome. The role of state governments in the cost of job creation should not be ignored."

Richard Berman of the Employment Policies Institute. "Recovery Without Jobs? No Way," *New York Times*, August 14, 2003. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/08/15/opinion/l-recovery-without-jobs-no-way-913618.html?scp=12&sq=richard+berman+minimum+wage&st=nyt>

2004

"From our perspective, raising the minimum wage is a job killer."

David Mr. Brandon, chairman and CEO of Domino's Pizza. Quoted in Carol Hymowitz, "What Top Executives Would Tell Bush if they Visited the Oval Office," *Wall Street Journal*, November 16, 2004. Available at: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB110056069554574762.html>

2006

"Restaurants are a low-margin business. A number of marginal operations which are more or less on the ragged edge right now might find this to be the straw that breaks the

camel's back, especially in northern Ohio where they've had a significant loss in manufacturing employment that's taken a lot of disposable income out of the economy."

Geoff Hetrick, president of the Ohio Restaurant Association. Quoted in: John M. Broder, "States Take Lead in Push to Raise the Minimum Wage," *New York Times*, January 2, 2006. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/02/national/02wage.html>

"The bill the Democrats sent to the governor would have indexed the minimum wage to the inflation rate, so that it would go up automatically along with the cost of living, beginning Jan. 1, 2008. That is unwise....placing future autopilot wage is fiscally unsound for California's economy."

Abel Maldonado (Republican state senator from California), "It's the Minimum Lawmakers Can Do..." *Los Angeles Times*, April 11, 2006. Available at: <http://articles.latimes.com/2006/apr/11/opinion/oe-maldonado11>

"Not only would there be a significant jump from the existing minimum wage, but the yearly increase tied to the consumer price index could cause serious problems for businesses that are in segments of the economy that are not doing well. Business revenues don't always keep up with inflation. Don't think that it's possible to get something for nothing. Vote no on prop 202."

From the Vote No on Proposition 202 (the "Minimum Wage" initiative) Facebook Fan page. 2006. <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2211896838>

2007

"They talk about the minimum wage increase. In fact, what they would do if they increased it in the way that they wanted to is to decrease the number of jobs on America and propose this unfunded mandate on American small businesses, which actually cuts the level of employment in our Nation. The Senate has recognized that, and they are working to try to correct the damage that the Democratic House has done."

Tom Price (R-GA), February 7, 2007: Republican Study Committee. Congressional Record, page H1324

"Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the minimum wage increase. Not only is this legislation detrimental to small business growth and job creation, but it has been brought to the floor outside the normal committee review process without the ability to consider an alternative.

I have long stood against minimum wage hikes, which increase government interference in the labor market. Economists agree that when the cost of labor increases, it becomes more difficult for employers to hire new workers."

Wally Herger (R-CA), Congressional Record, page H265, January 10, 2007.

2008

“On Jan. 1, the state’s minimum wage will rise 48 cents to \$8.55 an hour — a hike that the Washington Restaurant Association (WRA) said will be “crippling” to the industry.”

Washington Restaurant Association. Quoted in: “Washington restaurant trade group fears minimum wage hike,” Puget Sound Business Journal, October 2, 2008. Available at: <http://www.bizjournals.com/seattle/stories/2008/09/29/daily22.html>

2009

“Study after study has shown that this supposed benefit to the poor prices low-skilled workers out of entry-level jobs. It was unwise to keep raising the cost of hiring them in a recession. Economist David Neumark, co-author of a definitive book on minimum wages, said in a June Wall Street Journal op-ed that the July increase probably killed 300,000 jobs that would have otherwise gone to teenagers and young adults.”

Charles Lane, staff writer and editorial board member of the Washington Post. Quoted in: “Charles Lane on Job Killers that Should be Killed,” Washington Post, December 14, 2009. Available at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/12/13/AR2009121302448.html?hpid=opinionsbox1>

2010

“We cannot legislate prosperity. When we increase minimum wages by legislative fiat, we kill jobs. Government creates nothing but what it has first taken away.”

John Stossel, Fox Business. “The Minimum Wage Job Killer,” Stossel Blog, April 30, 2010. Available at: <http://www.fox-business.com/on-air/stossel/blog/archive/2010/04/30/3650/#ixzz0vAkBDHuy>

2013

“In fact, the impact of minimum wage usually is that businesses hire less people... We have a lot of history to prove that the minimum wage, raising the minimum wage does not grow the middle class.”

Sen. Marco Rubio, 2013. Benen, Steve, “Rubio Takes a Stand Against a Minimum Wage,” Maddow Blog, February 16, 2013, available: http://maddowblog.msnbc.com/_news/2013/02/15/16974959-rubio-takes-a-stand-against-a-minimum-wage.

Claim: Raising the minimum wage harms the very workers it intends to help

1938

“To maintain production cycles, it probably [will] be necessary to discharge large numbers of workers past 50, and it would also be more difficult for young and inexperienced workers to find jobs.”

J. O. Ball, spokesman for National Boot and Shoe Manufacturers Association. “Attacks Shoe Wage: Ball Says Minimum Would Cost Public 28,000,000 Yearly,” New York Times, December 17, 1939. Available at: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=F60E15FF385A177A93C5A81789D95F4D8385F9>

1955

“All that will happen if we pass this legislation, prices will go up. Inside of a year the man who gets a raise under it will be in the same relative position he is today. I think the people who are proposing these things don’t know what they are talking about. It means economic chaos for the very people they are trying to help.”

Senator Barry Goldwater (R-AZ). Quoted in: “Employers Fight Wage Act Change,” New York Times, May 11, 1956. Available at: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=F40612FF3D5F107A93C3A8178ED85F428585F9>

1965

“The meager net profit return presently ‘enjoyed’ by retailers will leave them little or no alternative but to pass the additional costs on the consumers in the form of higher prices.”

James J. Bliss, counsel for the National Retail Merchants Association. Quoted in: Isadore Barmash, “The Merchant’s Point of View,” New York Times, August 22, 1965. Available at: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=F50715FB3C5A157A93C0AB1783D85F418685F9>

1966

“An increase of \$0.25 per hour in the minimum wage would raise the unemployment rate for nonwhite teenagers by 8 percent.”

Arthur Burns, former chairman of the Federal Reserve. Quoted in: "A Public Choice View of the Minimum Wage," *Cato Journal* 5: 1985. Available at: <http://www.cato.org/pubs/journal/cj5n1/cj5n1-6.pdf>

1970s

"The minimum wage law is most properly described as a law saying employers must discriminate against people with low skills....The law says 'here is a man who has a skill that would justify a wage rate of \$1.50-to-\$2.00 an hour. You may not employ him, it is illegal. If you employ him you have to pay him \$2.50....To employ him at \$2.50 is to engage in charity.... The consequences of minimum wage laws have been almost wholly bad, to increase unemployment and to increase poverty. In my opinion there is absolutely no positive objective achieved by minimum wages."

Milton Friedman, televised interview. Date and program unknown. Appears to be the 1970s. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ca8Z__o52sk

1973

How is a person better off unemployed at a dollar sixty an hour than employed at a dollar fifty? No hours a week at a dollar sixty comes to nothing. Let's suppose there's a teenager whom you as an employer would be perfectly willing to hire for a dollar fifty an hour. But the law says, no, it's illegal for you to hire him at a dollar fifty an hour. You must hire him at a dollar sixty. Now, if you hire him at a dollar sixty, you're really engaging in an act of charity. You're paying a dollar fifty for his services and you're giving him a gift of 10 cents. That's something few employers, quite naturally, are willing to do or can afford to do without being put out of business by less generous competitors. As a result, the effect of a minimum-wage law is to produce unemployment among people with low skills. And who are the people with low skills? In the main, they tend to be teenagers and blacks, and women who have no special skills or have been out of the labor force and are coming back. This is why there are abnormally high unemployment rates among these groups.

Milton Friedman, in a 1973 interview in *Playboy* magazine. Quoted in: Geoffrey Norman, "The Playboy Interview: Milton Friedman" February 1973, Vol. 20, Iss. 2, pg. 51-68+74. I've often said the minimum-wage rate is the most anti-Negro law on the books.

Milton Friedman, in a 1973 interview in *Playboy* magazine. Quoted in: Geoffrey Norman, "The Playboy Interview: Milton Friedman" February 1973, Vol. 20, Iss. 2, pg. 51-68+74.

1977

"Under these inflationary pressures many of the industries and small businesses employing marginally trained or unskilled workers will be forced to cut back on the number of those employees or go out of business. The very worker

that the Federal minimum wage was intended to aid will find himself out of work."

Mickey Edwards (R-OK), *Congressional Record*, page H12268, April 26, 1977.

"We need to be realistic and understand minimum wage for what it really is: a limitation upon marginal workers to obtain employment of their own choosing, and a mechanism which serves to inhibit the upward mobility of those who have been fortunate enough to secure employment. Is this really what the proponents of minimum wage have in mind when they decry the evils of pricing and laud the supposed benefits of their program?"

Robert Badham (R-CA), *Congressional Record*, page H12270, April 26, 1977.

"It would appear that over a million essentially teenagers and minorities would be unemployed if this were to occur."

Jack W. Carlson, spokesman for U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Quoted in: "Chamber's View," *New York Times*, March 27, 1977. Available at: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=F70D1FFD3C5A107B93C5AB1788D85F438785F9>

"I am vitally concerned about the thousands of teenagers and young adults who will either lose their jobs or be rendered unemployable in the unskilled labor markets as the result of increasing the minimum wage to \$2.50 or more per hour."

Eldon Rudd (R-AZ), *Congressional Record*, page H12268, April 26, 1977.

"Youth unemployment and black unemployment will drastically rise. It's amazing to me that some black leaders want an increase in the minimum wage."

Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT). Quoted in: Irvin Molotsky, "Minimum Wage Bill Stalled in Senate," *New York Times*, September 23, 1988. <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/09/23/us/minimum-wage-bill-stalled-in-senate.html?scp=9&sq=%22minimum+wage%22+opposed&st=nyt>

1989

"The minimum wage law has also been harmful, despite good intentions, by pricing out of the market the least-skilled members of the work force. Because of inferior educational opportunities and other reasons, minority youth are disproportionately harmed by the minimum wage law."

Dilorenzo, Professor of Economics at the University of Tennessee. "Supreme Court Should Protect Economic and Civil Liberties," *New York Times*, October 14, 1990. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/1990/10/14/opinion/l-supreme>

court-should-protect-economic-and-civil-liberties-239790.html?scp=99&sq=%22minimum+wage%22+rise&st=nyt
“When the minimum wage goes up, the very people we say we want to help - the young, the unskilled, the disadvantaged - are the first people to get laid off.”

Representative William Goodling (R-PA) Quoted in: Susan Rasky, “House, Defying Threat of a Veto, Back Increase in Minimum Wage,” March 24, 1989.
<http://www.nytimes.com/1989/03/24/us/house-defying-threat-of-a-veto-backs-increase-in-minimum-wage.html?scp=1&sq=&pagewanted=2>

“When we pass minimum wage legislation it says one thing, Mr. Speaker: It says to the young black in the inner city, it says to the handicapped individual, it says to the young person looking for a first time job, unless you can meet a minimum standard, we will pass a law that says it is a violation of the Federal statute to hire such a person.

Bob McEwen (R-OH), Congressional Record, page H7765, October 31, 1989.

“Unemployment in our country is just over 5 percent, the lowest it has been in 15 years. But leave it to Congress to try and stop the current economic expansion by mandating a wage increase to \$4.55 an hour. An increase of this magnitude will destroy thousands of job opportunities for the young, the low-skilled, and the disadvantaged. In addition, raising the minimum wage will adversely affect small businesses, which create 70 percent of all new jobs.”

Cass Ballenger (R-NC), Congressional Record, page H1984, May 17, 1989.

“Work is what low-income people really need, and what they deserve from our society. We ought not force them off the work rolls and on the welfare rolls as a result of raising the minimum wage.

The last thing poor people need in this country is to have inflation rising up so that their minimum incomes are cut for the basic necessities of life as a result of inflation, and minimum wage laws raise inflation rates substantially. So what it does is cut the income of the poor noticeably.”

Robert Walker (R-PA), Congressional Record, page H2531, June 14, 1989.

Mr. Speaker, we can calculate to a certainty the number of people that we will unemploy by raising the minimum wage to various levels. At \$4.50, at \$5, at \$6, hundreds of thousands of people are denied access to the job market. Minimum wage laws create unemployment. That is a mean, vicious thing to do.”

Bob McEwen (R-OH), Congressional Record, page H7765, October 31, 1989.

“Youth unemployment is three times the overall unemployment rate, and for minority youth it is much, much higher. Let us not make the problem worse by enacting a minimum wage which denies young people jobs.”

Arthur Ravenel (R-SC), Congressional Record, page H1986, May 17, 1989.

1993

“Even the most mossback proposal of all, to raise the minimum wage, has also been hinted at by his staff. If this happens, it will make the family leave effects look like the Reagan boom. No legal mechanism has been so extensively studied as the job effects of the minimum wage. Every study not financed by organized labor finds that the higher the minimum, the more unemployment....it “only” mainly hurts the workers at the very bottom of the wage scale. Professor Richard Vedder estimates that the job loss under George Bush from minimum wage increases may have been more important in causing the prolonged sluggishness in the economy than any other single effect.”

Donald Devine, “Extinct political species; ‘New’ bird vanishes,” The Washington Times, February 23, 1993.

1995

“Increases in minimum wages may further disadvantage these women (on welfare) if employers are more likely to select teenagers possessing a high school diploma.”

Brandon, Peter, “Jobs Taken by Mothers Moving from Welfare to Work and the Effects of Minimum Wages on this Transition,” The Employment Policies Institute, 1995. Available at: http://www.epionline.org/study_detail.cfm?sid=61#

“As employers substitute toward these higher-skilled teenagers, lower-skilled teenagers...are displaced from the labor market...and are more likely to end neither enrolled in school nor employed.”

Neumark, David, “Effects of Minimum Wages on Teen Employment, Enrollment and Idleness,” The Employment Policies Institute, 1995. Available at: <http://www.nber.org/papers/w5092.v5.pdf>

1996

“I think you’ll start seeing the movement from welfare to work will slow down,” he said. “You’re now digging deeper into the welfare ranks to people who have fewer skills, yet what we’re doing now is increasing the price people have to pay for them.”

Jeffrey H. Joseph, spokesman for U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Quoted in: “In Labor Day Bonus, U.S. Raises Minimum Wage,” New York Times, September 1, 1997. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/1997/09/01/us/in-labor-day-bonus-us-raises-minimum-wage.html>

“An increase in the minimum wage will harm the poor. Increasing the minimum wage must result in workers being laid off and fewer job opportunities. It is just a matter of how many jobs will be lost. Assuming no job losses is equivalent to assuming a perfectly inelastic demand for unskilled labor, which clearly is not the case. Those that wish to increase the minimum wage assume that a majority of the Congress with the approval of the President may decide that those who lose their jobs, or are denied their first job, must suffer this in order to make others better off.”

Nick Smith (R-MI), Congressional Record, page H3790, April 24, 1996.

“Once again, we hear the cries to raise the minimum wage. The rhetoric is familiar; ‘the minimum wage isn’t a living wage,’ and ‘we need to ensure that work pays.’ However, raising the minimum wage is a misguided passion. All the valid research shows that raising the minimum wage destroys jobs. It hurts exactly those workers it intends to help—the poor, the unskilled, and the young. Everyone wants to see income growth boost the economic well-being of the working poor, but throwing many of them out of work is not the solution.”

Jim Saxton (R-NJ), Congressional Record, page E918, May 24, 1996.

1997

“Minimum wage laws may very well be the most anti-poor laws envisioned by modern government policymakers.”

Michael D. LaFaive, Mackinac Center for Public Policy

“In light of the recent jump in the minimum wage to \$5.15 an hour, employers not only are forced to pay more for entry-level workers, but they are also compelled to seek higher-quality workers. The result only worsens the prospects of low-skilled adults struggling to move off welfare.”

Richard Berman of the Employment Policies Institute in 1997.

1998

“When we raise the minimum wage,” Mr. Jeffords argued, “we make it more difficult for these businesses to justify hiring inexperienced, unskilled and untrained workers.”

Senator James M. Jeffords (R-VT), 1998.

<http://www.nytimes.com/1998/09/23/us/senate-votes-down-a-higher-minimum-wage-citing-squeeze.html>

1999

“The problem is raising the minimum wage actually hurts, not helps, low-income workers. Minimum wage laws make it illegal to have a job that pays below the government mandated limit. If that wage is more than a job provider will pay for a certain job, then no worker can get—or keep—that job.”

Catherine Martin, “Harmful Employment Laws Wage War on Low-Income Workers,” Mackinac Center for Public Policy, March 1, 1999. Available at: <http://www.mackinac.org/article.aspx?ID=1719>

“Minimum wage increases that even approach an average livable wage would result in significantly fewer jobs for low-wage workers. A substantial increase in the relative cost of labor will result in a reduction in the amount of labor used...”

Kavet, Thomas, Deborah Brighton, Douglas Hoffer, and Elaine McCrate. “Act 21 Research and Analysis In Support of the Livable Income Study Committee.” Vermont State Legislature, 2 Nov, 1999. Available at: <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/jfo/Reports/1999%20Livable%20Income%20Study.pdf>

“The minimum wage reduces education and training and increases long-term unemployment for low-skilled adults. Neumark and Wascher found that higher minimum wages cause employers to reduce on-the-job training. They also found that they encourage more teen-agers to drop out of school, lured into the labor force by wages that seem high to them. These teen-agers often displace low-skilled adults, who frequently become semi-permanently unemployed. Lacking skills and education, these teen-agers pay a price for the minimum wage in the form of lower incomes over their entire lifetime.

Bruce Bartlett, “Minimum Wage Teen-age Job Killer,” National Center for Policy Analysis, May 20, 1999. Available at: <http://www.ncpa.org/pub/ba292>

2000

“Research shows that after a wage increase, and given price-sensitive consumers, employers seek applicants who have better skills and make fewer mistakes. One study found that teenagers and students, who are perceived as having better skills, crowd out low-skilled adults after such an increase.”

Thomas K. Dilworth, “\$1 More for Middle Class,” New York Times, March 20, 2000. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/03/20/opinion/l-1-more-for-middle-class-338052.html>

2001

“Studies have found that increases in the minimum wage encourage some teenagers to drop out of school earlier than they otherwise would.”

N. Gregory Mankiw, “The Cost of a ‘Living Wage’: We can’t ignore law of supply and demand,” The Boston Globe, June 24, 2001. Available at: http://www.economics.harvard.edu/files/faculty/40_bglobe-june01.html

2003

“[T]he evidence from standard minimum wages indicates that minimum wage hikes fail to accomplish their principal policy goal of raising incomes of poor or low-income families.”

David Neumark and Scott Adams. “Do Living Wage Ordinances Reduce Urban Poverty?” *Journal of Human Resources* 38: 490-521. Retrieved on Jan 11, 2008 (<http://www.nber.org/papers/w7606>).

“If raising the minimum wage to \$12 or \$15 per hour will raise the standard of living for the working poor, why stop there? Why not raise the standard of living for the middle class as well by increasing the minimum wage to, say, \$25 an hour? If we raised it to \$100 an hour, we could have the best standard of living in history!”

Adam Summers, ‘Living Wage Law Isn’t Answer for CA: Laws Defy Basic Economics and Hurt Intended Beneficiaries.’ *Orange County Register*, Aug 18, 2001. Available at: (http://www.reason.org/commentaries/summers_20030818.shtml).

2005

“Any way you slice it, increasing the minimum wage in Michigan... is likely to make it more difficult for the working poor to find jobs. ...those who most need the work will have a harder time finding it.”

Paul Kersey, “The Minimum Wage Is Hardest on the Poor,” *Mackinac Center for Public Policy*, Aug 29, 2005. Available at: <http://www.mackinac.org/article.aspx?ID=7324>

2006

“The truth is that if your labor is worth \$6.75 an hour and the minimum wage is raised to \$7.75, you simply become unemployed. The first rung of the ladder is gone, and there’s no place to start....This legislation is the ultimate expression of the cruelest of all human lies: ‘I’m from the government, and I’m here to help.’”

Tom McClintock, Republican state senator for California’s 19th District in the California Legislature. “The MOST Important Thing For Any Person Trying To...” *Los Angeles Times*, April 11, 2006. Available at: <http://articles.latimes.com/2006/apr/11/news/OE-MCCLINTOCK11>

“In addition to the many negative effects of raising the minimum wage—such as lower levels of employment, higher drop-out rates for high school students, and a long-term reduction in wages—an increase in the minimum has been shown to reduce benefits in some states among those most in need.”

Rea S. Hederman, Jr. and Sam Hyman, “Low-Income Workers May Be Worse Off if Congress Increases the Minimum

Wage,” *Heritage Foundation*, August 3, 2006. Available at: (<http://www.heritage.org/Research/Economy/wm1187.cfm>).

“Minimum wage-earners’ average family income is almost \$50,000 per year. Very few are single parents working full-time to support their families—no more than in the population as a whole. It is not surprising, then, that studies show that higher minimum wages do not reduce poverty rates.”

Rea S. Hederman Jr. and James Sherk. “Who Earns the Minimum Wage—Single Parents or Suburban Teenagers?” *Heritage Foundation*, Aug 3, 2006. Available at: <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Economy/wm1186.cfm>

2007

“Raising the minimum wage to \$7.25 imposes a 41-percent increase in labor costs for a small employer with minimum wage workers.”

Representative Mike Enzi (R-WY), *Congressional Record*, 2007. Available at: http://books.google.com/books?id=DaFQ_F0bdnYC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

Raising the minimum wage doesn’t efficiently target the poor. Only one in five minimum wage workers live in households at or below the poverty line.

Representative Lamar Alexander (R-TN), *Congressional Record*, 2007. http://books.google.com/books?id=DaFQ_F0bdnYC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

“How much do you think the average New York household with one minimum wage worker earns per year? \$10,000? \$15,000? \$20,000? Wrong, wrong and wrong. It’s \$53,370 a year.”

Jill Jenkins, economist for the Employment Policies Institute. “A Raise Won’t End Poverty,” *New York Times*, July 1, 2007. Available at:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/01/opinion/nyregionopinions/O1WEjenkins.html>

2009

“Under-employment among young black males and low earnings among older black males are perennial problems explained in part by the minimum wage.”

Art Carden, Adjunct Fellow, Independent Institute. Carden, Art, “Repeal the Minimum Wage,” *Forbes*, October 16, 2009, available at: <http://www.forbes.com/2009/10/16/minimum-wage-labor-economics-opinions-contributors-art-carden.html>.

“The minimum wage is kinda like a sacred cow in Washington, with many lawmakers thinking it’s a win/win for low-skill workers. What if those good intentions backfired on the very people they were supposed to help? One school of thought says lowering the minimum wage will actually create more jobs”

FOX news anchor, December 15, 2009. Video available at: <http://thinkprogress.org/2009/12/15/fox-min-wage/>

2010

“A closer look at the unemployment [nearly 10 percent unemployment rate] suggests that minimum wage laws also deserve a big share of the blame....businesses are not charities and that they only create jobs when they think a worker will generate net revenue. Higher minimum wages, needless to say, are especially destructive for people with poor work skills and limited work experience. This is why young people and minorities tend to suffer most – which is exactly what we see in the government data, with the teenage unemployment rates now at an astounding (and depressing) 26 percent level and blacks suffering from a joblessness rate of more than 15 percent.”

Daniel Mitchell, senior fellow at the Cato Institute. “Minimum Wage Hike Deserves Share of the Blame for High Unemployment,” Cato @ Liberty Blog, June 15, 2010. Available at: <http://www.cato-at-liberty.org/minimum-wage-hikes-deserve-share-of-blame-for-high-unemployment/>

2011

“[Repealing the minimum wage] would help the poor people who need jobs. Minimum wage is a mandate. We’re against mandates so why should we have it? It would be very beneficial.”

Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX), Presidential Candidate. “Minimum Wage Haters: 11 People Who Have Spoken Out Against the Law,” Huffington Post, February 18, 2013, available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/02/18/minimum-wage-haters_n_2697384.html?ir=Business.

2012

“The NAACP supports minimum wage laws that study after study show disproportionately harm black workers, particularly younger black workers... Example after example after example, the NAACP shows itself to be more interested in promoting Democratic causes than necessarily supporting the interests of blacks.”

Jason Riley, Wall Street Journal Editorial Board. Frances Martel, “FOX News Guest NAACP Supports Minimum Wage Laws that ‘Disproportionately Harm Black Workers’,” Mediaite, May 26, 2012, available at: <http://www.mediaite.com/>

[tv/fox-news-guest-naacp-supports-minimum-wage-laws-that-disproportionately-harm-black-workers](http://fox-news-guest-naacp-supports-minimum-wage-laws-that-disproportionately-harm-black-workers).

2013:

“Look, I wish we could just pass a law saying everybody should make more money without any adverse consequences. The problem is you’re costing jobs from those who are just trying to get entry level job.”

Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI). Garofalo, Pat, “Top Republicans Oppose Obama’s Call to Raise the Minimum Wage,” Think Progress, February 13, 2013, available at: <http://thinkprogress.org/economy/2013/02/13/1587381/top-republicans-oppose-minimum-wage>.

Claim: Raising the minimum wage violates America’s commitment to Freedom

1923

“No greater calamity could befall the wage earners of the country than to have the legislative power to fix wages upheld. Take from the citizen the right to freely contract and sell his labor for the highest wage which his individual skill and efficiency will command, and the laborer would be reduced to an automaton – a mere create of the state. It will logically, if persisted in, end in social disorder and revolution.”

DC District Court Justice Van Orsdel opinion that declared the Washington D.C. minimum wage law. Quoted in: Alice Kessler-Harris, *A Women’s Wage: Historical Meanings and Social Consequences*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky: 1991), 50.

“This would be communism with a vengeance”
Ben W. Hooper, “The Fantasy of the Living Wage,” *Nation’s Business*, June 1923, pg. 16

“Another fact established by human experience is that a man performing common labor cannot expect to obtain directly from his daily wage all the comforts and conveniences of life.”

Ben W. Hooper, “The Fantasy of the Living Wage,” *Nation’s Business*, June 1923, pg. 16

1937

"[The Fair Labor Standards Act] constitutes a step in the direction of communism, bolshevism, fascism, and Nazism."

The National Association of Manufacturers, quoted in: TNR Staff, "Women's Suffrage and Other Visions of Right-Wing Apocalypse," The New Republic website, 21 December 2011. Available at: <http://www.tnr.com/article/womens-suffrage-and-other-visions-right-wing-apocalypse?page=0,1>

1938

"[The Fair Labor Standards Act] will destroy small industry... [these ideas are] the product of those whose thinking is rooted in an alien philosophy and who are bent upon the destruction of our whole constitutional system and the setting up of a red-labor communistic despotism upon the ruins of our Christian civilization."

Congressman Edward Cox (D-GA), Congressional Record

"The enactment of the [Fair Labor Standards Act], supplementing the National Labor Relations Act, would result in a wave of organization by the C. I. O. throughout the country and particularly in the South. The well-known and undenied communistic leadership of the C. I. O. in its field operations would be given an open field to spread communistic doctrines throughout the South and other parts of the country, and the labor and social unrest that would necessarily and inevitably result would change for the worse the whole industrial and social atmosphere of these regions."

Congressman Edward Cox (D-GA), Congressional Record, May 24, 1938.

"They include the probability that Federal wage-fixing and price fixing together will lead to compulsory arbitration in labor relations — not voluntarily but by sheer force of necessity as we are driven closer and ever closer to the centralized authoritarian State, with its tyranny of oppressive government-blessed monopolies."

Senator Arthur Vandenberg (R-MI), Quoted in: "Vandenberg Fears 'Fascist' Wage Bill," New York Times, June 5, 1938. Available at: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive/pdf?res=F30F14FE3C5D12738DDDAF0894DE405B878FF1D3>.

1960

"The fact of the matter is the Federal wage and hour law is one of the most vicious, antidemocratic pieces of legislation that has ever been perpetrated on the American public."

Lewis Manufacturing Co., Klamath Falls, OR, Letter to the President of the National Federation of Independent Busi-

nesses from federation member, February 24, 1960. 1977

"The question of the minimum wage goes beyond the immediate problem. It strikes at a basic underpinning of our democratic system. It touches on the ability of individuals to enter freely into contact without coercion and without arbitrary restrictions for mutual profit. Have we so soon forgotten that the American Revolution was fought in part because of such restrictions? Have we forgotten that there is a correlation between a free market economy and the amount of personal freedom enjoyed by the inhabitants of a country? I certainly hope not. What we are accomplishing by setting a minimum wage is restricting the ability of persons to freely contract for their services and, in so doing, effectively limiting their opportunities to achieve economic well-being."

Tom Hagedorn (R-MN), Congressional Record, page H12271, April 26, 1977.

1988

"America's competitive position could be jeopardized by the minimum wage bill."

Richard Berman, chairman of the Minimum Wage Coalition to Save Jobs. Quoted in: Hilary Stout, "The Economics of the Minimum Wage: Propping Up Payments at the Bottom," New York Times, January 24, 1988. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/01/24/business/the-economics-of-the-minimum-wage-propping-up-payments-at-the-bottom.html>

1993

"The creeping socialism begins at the \$5.05 level."

Eric Mund, Mega Management Corporation, a New Jersey Burger King franchise. Quoted in: Sylvia Nasar, "High New Jersey Minimum Wage Doesn't Seem to Deter Fast-Food Hiring, New Study Finds," New York Times, May 20, 1993. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/05/20/nyregion/high-new-jersey-minimum-wage-doesn-t-seem-to-deter-fast-food-hiring-study-finds.html>

1996

"Mr. Speaker, today the Democrats say goodbye to 500,000 jobs, according to the Federal Reserve, which is what the impact of increasing the minimum wage will be. That is no problem, though, because most of those folks will get on public benefits, which is exactly where the Democrats want them, right under the thumb of the Government so they can create dependency on the Government."

Representative Jack Kingston (R-GA), Congressional Record, 1996. Available at:

[http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/B?r104:@FIELD\(FLD003+h\)+@FIELD\(DDATE+19960522\)](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/B?r104:@FIELD(FLD003+h)+@FIELD(DDATE+19960522))

1997

“Slowly but surely, they’re taking away your liberty to mutually make employment decisions. I dare say that’s socialism. It’s government paternalism at its worst.”

Mark Wilson, Heritage Foundation. Quoted in: Peter T. Kilborn, “A Minimum-Impact Minimum Wage,” New York Times, April 6, 1997. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/1997/04/06/weekinreview/a-minimal-impact-minimum-wage.html>

2007

“Mr. Speaker, in America, we can either have maximum opportunity or we can have minimum wages. We cannot have both. In the land of the free, in a Nation as great as ours, how can we deny people their maximum opportunity, their opportunity to secure the American Dream?

Well, apparently, our Democrat colleagues can, because, for thousands, they will now replace the American Dream of boundless career opportunities instead with the nightmare of welfare dependence.”

“Now, what is the effect of this law? Indeed, I admit, some will have a mandated pay raise in America. Those will be the lucky ones. Many more will have their hours cut, Mr. Speaker. Many will have their benefits cut due to this law, and many will lose their jobs. And again, thousands, thousands will be denied that opportunity to climb on that first rung of the economic ladder in America and, instead, be condemned to a life of poverty. This should not happen in America.”

Jeb Hensarling (R-TX), Speaking to the House of Representatives on January 10, 2007: Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007. Congressional Record, page H264.

CITATIONS

- ¹ “History of Federal Minimum Wage Rates Under the Fair Labor Standards Act, 1938 – 2009,” Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor, available at: <http://www.dol.gov/whd/minwage/chart.htm>
- ² “Minimum Wage Laws in the States - January 1, 2013,” Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor, available at: <http://www.dol.gov/whd/minwage/america.htm>
- ³ A large body of research shows that raising the minimum wage is an effective way to boost the incomes of low-paid workers without reducing employment. A groundbreaking 1994 study by David Card and Alan Krueger, current chair of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, found that an increase in New Jersey’s minimum wage did not reduce employment among fast-food restaurants (Card, David and Alan Krueger, “Minimum Wages and Employment: A Case Study of the Fast Food Industry in New Jersey and Pennsylvania,” *American Economic Review* 84 (1994): 772-793). These findings have been confirmed by 15 years of economic research, including a 2010 study that analyzed data from more than 500 counties and found that minimum wage increases did not cost jobs (Dube, Arindrajit, T. William Lester, and Michael Reich, “Minimum Wage Effects Across State Borders: Estimates Using Contiguous Counties,” *Review of Economics and Statistics* 92 (2010): 945-964). Another recent study published in April 2011 found that even during times of high unemployment, minimum wage increases did not lead to job loss (Allegretto, Sylvia A., Arindrajit Dube, and Michael Reich, “Do Minimum Wages Really Reduce Teen Employment? Accounting for Heterogeneity and Selectivity in State Panel Data,” *Industrial Relations* 50 (2011): 205-240).
- ⁴ Lake, Celinda, Daniel Gotoff, and Alex Dunn, “Public Support for Raising the Minimum Wage,” Lake Research Partners, February 2012, available at: http://nelp.3cdn.net/0be1c6315f2430afa6_arm6bq9wu.pdf.
“Broad, Strong Support for Raising the Minimum Wage and Indexing to the Cost of Living,” Public Religion Research Institute, October 2012, available at: http://nelp.3cdn.net/ed7858ccb0d068a3f6_nwm6bnjppj.pdf.
Dimock, Michael, “Maximum Support for Raising the Minimum,” Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, April 2006, available at: <http://www.pewresearch.org/files/old-assets/obdeck/pdf/18.pdf>.
- ⁵ Schmitt, John and Janelle Jones, “Where Have All the Good Jobs Gone?” Center for Economic and Policy Research, July 2012, available at: <http://www.cepr.net/documents/publications/good-jobs-2012-07.pdf>
- ⁶ Schmitt, John and Marie-Eve Augier, “Affording Health Care and Education on the Minimum Wage,” Center for Economic and Policy Research, March 2012, available at: <http://www.cepr.net/index.php/blogs/cepr-blog/blog-post-health-and-education-on-the-minimum-wage>