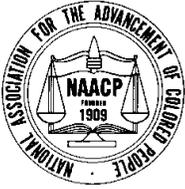


Testimony of Sandra Thompson, Esq., In Support Of Raising The Minimum Wage To At Least \$10.10 per hour



York NAACP Branch #2294

PO Box 184

York, PA 17405

Email: yorknaacp2294@gmail.com; sthompsonLLC@gmail.com

Telephone: 717-577-4436

TESTIMONY ON RAISING THE PENNSYLVANIA MINIMUM WAGE

PA Senate Labor and Industry Committee

May 5, 2015

POSITION: In Support Of Raising The Minimum Wage To At Least \$10.10

Hour

Statement by: Sandra Thompson, Esq
York NAACP Unit #2294 President
NAACP PA State Conference Housing Chair
NAACP PA State Conference Economic Development member
NAACP PA State Conference 1st Vice President

Thank you Chairman Baker, Senator Tartaglione, and members of the Senate Labor & Industry Committee for the opportunity to testify in favor of raising the minimum wage to a livable wage, raising the tipped minimum wage, and in favor of cost of living increases.

My name is Sandra Thompson. I live in Springettsbury Township York County where Mike Folmer is my Senator. I am President of York NAACP, a County unit, where we spend a lot of time advocating for residents of the City of York where Scott Wagner is the Senator. I am also the Housing Chair, member of the Economic Development Committee, and 1st Vice President of NAACP PA State Conference.

NAACP PA State Conference has over 10000 members in over 30 units throughout the state. At the Quarterly meeting in April for the NAACP PA State Conference, the Executive Committee voted to act on the National agenda in favor of all units advocating to Raise the Minimum Wage to at least \$10.10 an hour.

NAACP supports raising the minimum wage to at least \$10.10 per hour, because it advocates for Economic Sustainability where “Every person will have equal opportunity to achieve economic success, sustainability, and financial security”¹.

¹ <http://www.naacp.org/pages/game-changers>

NAACP recognized that the federal minimum wage lost more than 30% of its value and would be more than \$10.55 per hour today if it had kept pace with the cost of living over the past forty years. The minimum wage today pays only around \$15,000 per year, which is \$3,000 below the poverty level for a family of 3.²

The 2015 poverty guidelines for a family of 3 is \$20, 090.00. The poverty guidelines for a family of 4 is \$24, 250.00. So, to boost the average family income to above the poverty guidelines, the minimum wage would need to be increased to at least \$11.75 per hour.³ An increase of the minimum wage to only \$8.75 per hour maintains the average working family in poverty, providing them with an annual income of only \$18, 200.00.

The average monthly income at \$8.75 per hour is \$1517.00. The average monthly income at \$10.10 per hour is \$1751.00. In the York City area, the average family pays a minimum of around \$600.00 monthly rent⁴. However, the average rental costs drastically increases as you move to the surrounding township areas or improve the quality of the rental property. It increases as well as you consider rents in areas across the state, like Philadelphia.

On the thrifty plan, it costs around \$514.00 per month to feed an average family of 3.⁵ However, the thrifty plan often causes a family to forgo fresh fruits, vegetables, and quality meats. The thrifty plan generally means that a family is choosing more boxed and processed foods which can negatively affect their health.

The average utility costs for a family can amount to around \$380.00 per month. (The average monthly costs of: water and sewer are \$80 per month⁶; electric is \$100.00 per month⁷; and heat by natural gas is \$100.00 per month⁸.)

There yet remains the average costs of healthcare, childcare, transportation, clothing a family, and for telephone services. All required to meet the basic needs of each

² http://action.naACP.org/page/-/action%20alerts/MINIMUM_WAGE_INCREASE.10-7-2014.pdf

³ <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/15poverty.cfm>

⁴ <http://www.homes.com/rentals/york-pa/p3/?beds=2>

⁵ <http://www.choosingvoluntarysimplicity.com/how-much-does-it-cost-to-feed-your-family/>

⁶ <http://yourbusiness.azcentral.com/pennsylvanias-average-water-sewer-bill-20617.html>

⁷ <https://eyeonhousing.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/map6.png>

⁸ <https://www.columbiagaspa.com/billing-payment-options/rate-adjustment-information/fuel-cost-comparison-calculator> (with natural gas efficiency furnace)

family. However, for an impoverished working family, the income has been expended, so these basic needs must be subsidized.

A working family should be able to enjoy the simply luxury of cable television and a night of entertainment- a movie, bowling, a dinner at a restaurant other than fast food. However, they have little to no disposable income. Increasing the minimum wage boosts the economy because it increases the spending power of over a million Pennsylvanians.⁹

For all of these stated reasons and for all of the reasons put forth to you today and throughout the campaign by many partners in favor of raising the minimum wage to at least \$10.10 per hour, I strongly urge the committee to **vote yes** to increase the Pennsylvania minimum wage to a livable wage above the poverty guidelines, **vote yes** to raising the wage for tipped workers to at least 70% of minimum wage, and **vote yes** to indexing future wage increases to the rising cost of living.

Respectfully Submitted:

Sandra Thompson, Esq

⁹ <http://keystoneresearch.org/media-center/press-releases/new-study-finds-raising-minimum-wage-1010hour-will-benefit-12-million-wo>