

Remark on the Minimum Wage from a Women's Perspective

Hello my name is Evelyn Dodds, Operations Manager for Philadelphia Unemployment Project better known as PUP. PUP leads the Raise the Wage PA coalition which is working to increase Pennsylvania's minimum wage to at least \$10.10 an hour, eliminate the tipped minimum wage, and institute a yearly cost of living increase. PUP is also a member of the Making Work Pay PA coalition which also supports the minimum wage increase.

As many of you might know the minimum wage in PA is currently \$7.25 and hours and the tipped minimum wage stands at \$2.83 per hour. The minimum wage has not been raised since 2007, with the exception of a .10cent federal increase in 2009. Tipped wages since 1998.

Today we want to discuss the minimum wage increase from a women's perspective. How will an increase in the minimum wage affect women in particular?

Women are the most affected by the increase in the minimum wage.

Women today are almost as present in the workforce as men are. According to the US Department of Labor statistic over 57% of women are active in the workforce.

By 2022 the number of women in the workforce is expected to increase by 5.6%.

And yet, over 65% of Pennsylvanians working for minimum wage or below (tipped wage) are women.

Tipped workers are primarily women, over 30% are moms, and half of these are single moms.

70% of tipped restaurant workers are women. Unfortunately because they are generating most of their income from customer's tips they often tolerate inappropriate behavior from customers and in a position where they can be sexually harassed by customers, managers and co-workers.

- USA Today reported 90% of women in restaurant jobs reported some time of harassment.
- Time reported 66% of females restaurant workers report being sexually harassed by manager
 - 78% by customers
 - 80% by co-workers
- New York Times reported “living on tips means putting up with harassment”

The Keystone Research Center estimates that if the minimum wage were gradually increased to \$10.10 per hour beginning this year, by 2016, over 1 million

(1,266,000) Pennsylvania workers would get a raise. Of the total affected workers, about 721,000 (57 percent) are women

A woman working full time, year round in Pennsylvania at the current minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour will earn just \$15,080 annually, more than \$3,000 below the federal poverty line for a mother with two children.

Increasing the minimum wage to \$10.10 per hour would boost annual full-time earnings by \$5,928 to \$21,000, enough to pull a family of three out of poverty for those making minimum wage. For worker making tipped minimum wage the increase would be over 14,000 a year. The elimination of tip wage will provide more stable and adequate base earnings.

A fair minimum wage will allow a single mother of two (2) to work less hours to keep her family afloat and therefore spend more quality time with her children. Maybe even find time to go back to school get a degree and find a much better paying Job. It will help women meet their basic needs.

Raising the minimum wage does not cause job loss, even during periods of recession. In fact, according to Keystone Research Center estimates that raising the state minimum wage to \$10.10 per hour would generate over \$1.8 billion in

additional economic activity and create or support about 6,000 new jobs in Pennsylvania.

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