

We have a business that employ's 24, our entry level wage is \$13.50 per hour, and our highest is @ \$65.00 per hour. One of our main dilemmas is finding qualified people to meet the technical demands of our industry. We have found that we are able to bring in an apprentice to learn our trade, put them through extensive training at tremendous additional cost to our business. This means adding a technician to each project that we can't charge our clients for. It takes approximately 1 year to bring a starting tech from \$13.50 to \$17.00 per hour. Then they are put through the state apprenticeship program, at more additional costs, to us, and eventually get them above \$20.00 per hour.

My concern in raising the minimum wage, is the ability for us to add another layer of cost to our hourly charge rate to our clients, which is already at a premium. To do the math, for every dollar you raise the minimum wage, we have to raise this times 24, each of our employees, that have worked to get to where they are at, will expect to enjoy the raise the uneducated employee enjoys. 24 times 8 equals \$192.00 additional per day, plus add the overtime multiple if that apply's. I will need to raise my charges to our clients for services done by an additional 10 to 25%, which in turn reduces our ability to be competitive in the market place...In addition we are unable to add profit margin to retail goods, as they are a market driven economy. The retail marketplace is quickly going to e-commerce, leaving businesses like ours at a disadvantage, as e-commerce will not experience the same wage encrease.

I would suggest that the average person you are trying to help, will be the most affected by this wage increase...The price of goods and services will increase to compensate, therefore making the basic cost of food and service inflated to meet the new wage...net, net we will not be able to afford products or services any more than today...what more likely will happen, is that businesses like ours will need to cut back our staff, reduce our extended services.

The hidden costs of raising the minimum wage include; all support staff will be paid higher wages, a cost to the end consumer. Suppliers raising their costs, a cost to the end consumer. The freight companies raising their costs, a cost to the end consumer. Fuel prices raised, a cost to the end consumer. If you raise minimum wage 10%, you will raise cost of goods and services by about 25%...don't forget that each and every part of the chain of business is affected by the increase, as noted above. I left out many additional expenses that we may need to do away with, such as the landscaper, housekeeper, their wages will surely be reflected in the fees they charge us.

Another cost saver for us most likely will be that we will no longer will be able to support the community organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Kiwanis and other service organizations that help make our community great. We contribute to many local causes that would be directly affected by raising the minimum wage.

In closing, I would like to suggest that the minimum wage is not intended to be a living wage, but a starting point for the untrained. The overall affect of raising the price of a hamburger will affect the very persons you are trying to help...Allow the marketplace to grow qualified people to positions of wealth, rather than crippling the business community that is trying to give a good product for a reasonable price. There will be far fewer choices for goods and services, as business will not be able to survive the additional costs of doing business.

Are any of you old enough to appreciate the price of a McDonald's hamburger @ 11 cents? I was earning \$.65 cents an hour in the 60's and could enjoy a night at the movies, feed my date and pay for gas \$.19 per gal, for under \$5.00...The cost of runaway inflation is directly related to the minimum wage. As a teen, I was excited to be in the workforce and proud to be able pay my way...lets not take the pride of growing into a better lot in life away, teach people how to produce and give them a reason to excell...

Regards,

**Dennis Lewis / President**  
**Lewis Audio Video, Inc.**  
v [503.538.1190 x103](tel:503.538.1190) ° f [503.538.5419](tel:503.538.5419)