



Young Democrats of Hawai'i

Representative Alex Sonson, Chair
Representative Bob Nakasone, Vice Chair
Committee on Labor and Public Employment

LATE TESTIMONY

Justin Woodson, President
Young Democrats of Hawai'i

Tuesday, February 05, 2008

The Young Democrats of Hawai'i partially exists to provide a voice and to address concerns of all adolescence members here in Hawai'i. We **strongly support HB 2930**, relating the state minimum wage, which would increase the wage to \$8.00 beginning 7/1/08 to \$9.00 beginning on 7/1/09.

The current minimum wage is simply not sufficient for the costs associated with living in Hawai'i, which is an ever increasing burden on its population as a whole. Speaking with people all across the Island's, I can assure you that the issue on the forefront of many minds including younger ones is the escalating cost of living here in Hawai'i. One way to address this important issue is to upwardly adjust the current state minimum wage. It is our hope that besides the direct positive effect a state minimum wage increase will have on the affected population; such an increase will also push up most other wages as well.

Hawai'i's minimum wage is the absolute lowest when comparing our cost of living using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) with all other comparable areas, (comparables defined as regions with similar CPI's). This indicates that Hawai'i is in fact lagging behind were it should be for its minimum wage law. As an example, the Los Angeles metropolitan area's minimum wage is set at \$8.00/Hr, while their Consumer Price Index is 217.338. The greater Honolulu's CPI lies at 216.620 with a minimum wage of \$7.25/Hr. Even more dramatic is Chicago which has a CPI of 204.818. Their minimum wage is \$7.50/Hr and is scheduled to increase to \$7.75 by July of this year. Portland's current CPI is 206.653 and their minimum wage is \$7.80 and indexed to inflation.

By increasing the minimum wage here in Hawai'i, we are carrying out the will of the people; most of which have great day to day financial challenges. We urge that your committee on Labor and Public Employment pass HB 2930. Mahalo nui loa for your consideration on this crucial matter.

YDHI, Live Better!