



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 321
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
www.hawaii.gov/labor
Phone: (808) 586-8842 / Fax: (808) 586-9099
Email: dlir.director@hawaii.gov

January 23, 2012

To: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair, Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair
and Members of the House Committee on Labor & Public Employment

Date: Tuesday, March 24, 2010

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Place: Conference Room 309, State Capitol

From: Dwight Y. Takamine, Director
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

Re: H.B. No. 1682 Relating to Labor

I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

H.B. No. 1682 proposes two increases in the Hawai'i minimum wage, currently at \$7.25 per hour, as follows:

- \$7.75 per hour beginning July 1, 2012; and
- \$8.25 per hour beginning July 1, 2013.

The DLIR "is responsible for ensuring and increasing the economic security, well-being, and productivity of Hawai'i's workers,"¹ and therefore strongly supports increasing the minimum wage.

II. CURRENT LAW

The current minimum wage matches the federal minimum wage and is set at \$7.25 per hour beginning January 1, 2007.

III. COMMENTS ON HOUSE BILL

- The Department advocates that minimum wage is appropriate to prevent certain employers from exploiting their employees by establishing a wage floor for Hawai'i's workers. Hawai'i's workers deserve to regain some of the

lost purchasing power since the last rise in the minimum wage on January 1, 2007. The table below illustrates the loss of buying power since the last rise in the minimum wage as well as projections, both tied to the CPI-W.

Year	Honolulu CPI-W First Half	CPI-W Percent Increase	Hawai'i Minimum Wage	\$7.25 MW Inflated by CPI-W	Current/Proposed MW minus Inflated \$7.25
2006	205.6	5.7%	\$6.75		
2007	215.681	4.9%	\$7.25		
2008	226.738	5.1%	\$7.25	\$7.62	(\$0.37)
2009	226.462	-0.1%	\$7.25	\$7.61	(\$0.36)
2010	233.089	2.9%	\$7.25	\$7.83	(\$0.58)
2011	240.874	3.3%	\$7.25	\$8.09	(\$0.84)
2012		2.8%	\$7.75	\$8.32	(\$0.57)
2013		2.5%	\$8.25	\$8.53	(\$0.28)
2014		2.5%	\$8.25	\$8.74	(\$0.49)

- The department notes that the following eighteen states and the District of Columbia have higher minimum wages than Hawai'i:

Alaska	\$7.75
Arizona	\$7.65
California	\$8.00
Colorado	\$7.64
Connecticut	\$8.25
D.C.	\$8.25
Florida	\$7.67
Illinois	\$8.25
Maine	\$7.50
Massachusetts	\$8.00
Michigan	\$7.40
Montana	\$7.65
Nevada	\$8.25
New Mexico	\$7.50
Ohio	\$7.70
Oregon	\$8.80
Rhode Island	\$7.40
Vermont	\$8.46
Washington	\$9.04

- Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands have the same rate as Hawai'i's current

minimum wage rate.

- The department believes that the higher wages earned by the minimum wage workers will likely be spent and therefore contribute to the economic recovery of the state. This measure would also allow families to make more purchases from small businesses in Hawaii that survive on the ability of workers to purchase their goods and services.
- DLIR suggests that due to planning considerations, the effective date of this measure should be changed to October 1, 2012.



888 Mililani Street, Suite 601
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813-2991

Telephone: 808.536.2351
Facsimile: 808.528.4059

www.hgea.org

The Twenty-Sixth Legislature, State of Hawaii
House of Representatives

Committee on Labor and Public Employment

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

January 24, 2012

H.B. 1682 – RELATING TO LABOR

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO strongly supports the purpose and intent of H.B. 1682, which increases minimum wage to \$7.75 for 2012 and \$8.25 from July 1, 2013.

This measure, if implemented, will be an investment in our economy. The current minimum hourly wage rate of \$7.25, assuming an employee works full time, provides an annual income of just \$15,080 per year, before taxes. There is no debate the cost of living in Hawaii is high, especially the cost of shelter and food. The proposed increase for the first year will put about \$1,000 into the pockets of low-wage workers, who most certainly will spend those additional earnings on goods and services in our community. We urge you to pass this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 1682.

Respectfully submitted,

Leiomalama E. Desha
Deputy Executive Director



The Twenty-Sixth Legislature, State of Hawaii
Hawaii State House of Representatives
Committee on Labor & Public Employment

Testimony by
Hawaii State AFL-CIO
January 24, 2011

H.B. 1682 – RELATING TO
LABOR

The Hawaii State AFL-CIO strongly supports H.B. 1682 which increases the minimum wage to \$7.75 for 2012 and \$8.25 from 07/01/2013.

Hawaii's cost of living is the highest in the nation; however, our minimum wage is still equal to the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour. This is truly unfortunate. States with a lower cost of living have increased their minimum wage while we sit back. States such as California, Washington, Illinois, Oregon, and even Nevada all have a higher minimum wage than Hawaii. In fact, 18 states have a higher minimum wage than Hawaii and all of them have a lower cost of living. Additionally, Santa Fe, New Mexico will raise its minimum wage to \$10.29 an hour, the highest mandatory minimum wage in the country on March 1, 2012 and a number of studies have indicated Santa Fe's living wage hasn't had a negative affect on vital components of Santa Fe's economy, such as job creation and unemployment.

Moreover, the poverty line for a family of two in Hawaii as of 2011, is \$16,930, and is increased to \$21,320 for a family of three. A full-time minimum wage worker in Hawaii who works 40 hours a week for 52 weeks would earn \$58.00 dollars a day, \$290.00 dollars a week, and a disturbingly low \$15,080.00 dollars a year. This, unfortunately for a family of two or more, is well below the poverty level. In fact, in 2009, more than 156,000 Hawaii residents were below the poverty line, a nearly 5 percent increase from 2007.

Finally, according to a report by the National Economic Council in 2000, increasing the minimum wage does not have a negative effect on employment. They proclaim "since the minimum wage increase in 1996, the economy has created more than 10 million jobs and the unemployment rate has fallen from 5.2 percent in September 1996 to 4.1 percent in

February 2000, near its lowest level in thirty years. Labor market trends for workers most affected by the minimum wage increase—including younger workers, workers with lower educational levels, and minorities—also show no negative impact of the minimum wage on employment. Numerous careful economic studies, including ones by David Card and Alan Krueger, have shown that increasing the minimum wage has no negative effect on employment. Recent research has even suggested that higher wages can increase employment, because they increase employers' ability to attract, retain, and motivate workers. And they benefit workers by increasing the reward to work.”

We strongly urge the passage of H.B. 1682.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Bradshaw
COPE Director



**Testimony to the House Committee on Labor & Public Employment
Tuesday, January 24, 2012
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
State Capitol - Conference Room 309**

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 1682 RELATING TO LABOR

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

My name is Jim Tollefson and I am the President and CEO of The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii ("The Chamber"). I am here to state The Chamber's opposition to House Bill No. 1682 relating to Labor.

The Chamber is the largest business organization in Hawaii, representing more than 1,000 businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of its members, which employ more than 200,000 individuals, to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

The concept of this measure is to ensure that workers earning a minimum wage can make ends meet and we truly understand and emphasize especially given this current economic situation.

The enactment of a minimum wage increase at this time, however, will undermine efforts made to turn Hawaii's economy around. Hawaii's business community is at a critical point -- where any additional mandates could mean the difference between continued existence, or bankruptcy. As evidenced by recent media accounts, many local establishments, some of which have faithfully served consumers for generations, are going out of business.

The real cost to business includes all of the other employee benefits and taxes that are tied to the employee's wages. Those basic costs include, but not limited to:

- Social Security tax
- Unemployment tax
 - The unemployment insurance fund is 100% employer funded.
- Pre-paid Health Care
- Workers Compensation premiums
 - Employers pay the full cost of the premium.

- Temporary Disability Insurance premiums
 - Employers pay either the entire premium, or may charge 50% of the premium (not to exceed .5% of weekly wages) to eligible employees).

Increasing the minimum wage will require employers to pay additional costs after adding the additional taxes of FICA, Medicare and FUTA. In addition, employers are required to pay a number of other taxes including GET, to run their business.

The intent of this bill is to increase the wage for the lowest paying jobs to ensure that the minimum wage keeps up with inflation. The bill intends to have the minimum wage raised in proportion to the rate of inflation Hawaii experienced over the past few years.

Economists have argued, however, that raising the minimum wage will:

- Not improve the quality of life for minimum wage earners and will actually hurt those who are seeking entry-level jobs.
- Most employees earn far more than the minimum wage
- Minimum wage increase actually causes a reduction in the number of entry-level jobs because of the increased cost to employers to maintain such jobs.

The Chamber opposes an increase in the minimum wage because there is no evidence to suggest that an increase is necessary. An increase in the minimum wage will cause inflation and a reduction in the number of available entry level jobs. That is an economic reality. Unless the legislature can properly analyze the impact of the proposed increases, the consequence could be far more damaging and will not have the beneficial impact the bill intends.

The damaging effect of a minimum wage increase will be an increase in the rate of inflation. The cost of goods produced and sold will go up because of increased labor cost. The segment of our population that will be most greatly impacted will be those very poor people this bill claims it seeks to help. Goods and services will cost more so, while the minimum wage earners will earn more, the actual purchasing power of that income may stay the same. Another large sector of our population it will hurt will be our seniors who are on a fixed income. Their income will not increase, and any inflation caused by an increase in the minimum wage will shrink the value of their fixed income.

In addition, the economy will be better served if the minimum wage is kept at its current level because if employers can afford to hire workers at the minimum wage, more employees will be able to find employment. Once employed, the employee can improve their economic position by performing well on the job and receiving raises. If fewer jobs are available, the population this bill seeks to assist will find it harder to secure an entry level job.

While we understand the intent of the bill, the Chamber urges your Committee to hold this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Representative Kyle Yamashita, Vice Chair
Committee on Labor & Public Employment
State Capitol, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813



HEARING Tuesday, January 24, 2012
9:00 am
Conference Room 309

RE **HB1682, Relating to Labor**

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Yamashita, and Members of the Committee:

Retail Merchants of Hawaii (RMH) is a not-for-profit trade organization representing 200 members and over 2,000 storefronts, and is committed to support the retail industry and business in general in Hawaii. The retail industry is one of the largest employers in the state, employing 25% of the labor force.

RMH strongly opposes HB1682, which increases the minimum wage to \$7.75 for 2012 and \$8.25 from 07/01/2013.

When the economy faltered, retailers took significant measures to maintain employment levels by containing employment costs through across-the-board wage and salary reductions, while keeping benefits intact.

Three years later, the retail industry is growing, with existing companies opening new locations and new retailers entering the marketplace. Hundreds of new retail jobs are being created, with compensation levels based on the current economic conditions and employment regulations. Increasing the minimum wage is counterproductive to this growth.

An increase in the minimum wage causes a compression of wages between newly hired, inexperienced workers and veteran, experienced employees. An attempt to mandate scheduled but indeterminate adjustments at the lowest tier of the employment scale would cause a tremendous and prohibitive increase in overall employment costs. Furthermore, an increase in payroll costs would also lead to increases in benefit costs that are based on wages, including vacation and holiday pay, unemployment insurance, social security and Medicare, and workers' compensation premiums.

Businesses are preparing for the expected increases in Unemployment Insurance. Marketing, advertising and travel budgets remain at reduced levels, while basic operating expenses, particularly shipping and fuel costs, have significantly increased.

Our economy remains tenuous. Our focus should be on stabilizing our businesses so as to enable increasing employment and hastening recovery.

The members of the Retail Merchants of Hawaii respectfully request that you hold HB1682. Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

Carol Pregill, President

RETAIL MERCHANTS OF HAWAII
1240 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 215
Honolulu, HI 96814
ph: 808-592-4200 / fax: 808-592-4202



The Voice of Small Business®

Before the House Committee on Labor & Employment

DATE: Tuesday, January 24
TIME: 9:00 a.m.
PLACE: Conference Room 309

HB 1682: Relating to Labor
Testimony of NFIB Hawaii

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition of HB 1682. NFIB Hawaii respectfully **opposes** this measure.

This legislation would increase minimum wage to \$7.75 for 2012 and \$8.25 from 07/01/2013. No one has greater incentive, responsibility or ability to lead an economic recovery than America's small business owners - 350,000 of whom are NFIB members. Therefore, we ask lawmakers to help ensure that public policies help spur economic growth by taking into account the unique perspective of those who own and operate a small business in America. We note that small businesses play a major role in the American economy, representing 99% of all employer firms, employing about half of private-sector employees and generating 60 – 80 percent of net new jobs annually over the last decade.

NFIB opposes increases in the current minimum wage. Mandatory wage increases hurt not only small businesses, but their employees as well. Most minimum-wage jobs are offered by small businesses. The overwhelming majority of economists continue to affirm the negative impact of mandatory wage increases on jobs. Mandatory minimum-wage increases end up reducing employment levels for those people with the lowest skills.

The National Federation of Independent Business is the largest advocacy organization representing small and independent businesses in Washington, D.C., and all 50 state capitals. In Hawaii, NFIB represents more than 1,000 members. NFIB's purpose is to impact public policy at the state and federal level and be a key business resource for small and independent business in America. NFIB also provides timely information designed to help small businesses succeed.

841 Bishop Street, Suite 2100, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 (808) 447-1840



Labor Caucus

January 30, 2011

Representative Karl Rhodes
Hawaii State Capital
Labor & Public Employment
415 South Beretania Street, Room 329
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Subject: H.B. No.1682 Hearing January 24, 2012 Testimony in Support

To: Representative Karl Rhodes and Labor & Public Employment committee

Aloha, my name is Steve Canales. I strongly support H.B. 1682; increase in the minimum wage.

The time is now to increase the minimum wage. Families in our state, who lost their jobs in 2011, are finding work, which only pays minimum wage. There are those who contemplate between taking a minimum wage job, or collecting unemployment insurance. The reason is, unemployment insurance pays a higher weekly amount, many of these workers are optimistic about finding a higher paying job.

I would like to make a friendly amendment and request a \$1 increase for the current minimum wage.

I strongly support H.B. 1682. I would like to thank the Economic Labor & Public Employment committee for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Steve Canales
Labor Caucus Chair
Democratic Party of Hawaii
1050 Ala Moana Blvd. Ste. #2150
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

The Twenty-Sixth Legislature
Regular Session of 2012

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Committee on Labor & Public Employment
Rep. Karl Rhoads, Chair
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair
State Capitol, Conference Room 309
Tuesday, January 24, 2012; 9:00 a.m.

**STATEMENT OF THE ILWU LOCAL 142 ON H.B. 1682
RELATING TO LABOR**

The ILWU Local 142 strongly supports H.B. 1682, which increases the minimum wage to \$7.75 on July 1, 2012 and to \$8.25 on July 1, 2013.

Hawaii's minimum wage has been at \$7.25 an hour since January 1, 2007. Although Hawaii's minimum usually exceeded the federal minimum wage in the past, it is currently even with the federal minimum, despite the undisputed fact that Hawaii's cost of living is among the highest in the country.

Opponents of a minimum wage increase are quick to point out that those who earn a minimum wage are often young people who live with their parents and have no one else to support. While that may be true in part, it is also true that many adults work two or more minimum wage or near-minimum wage jobs to support their families.

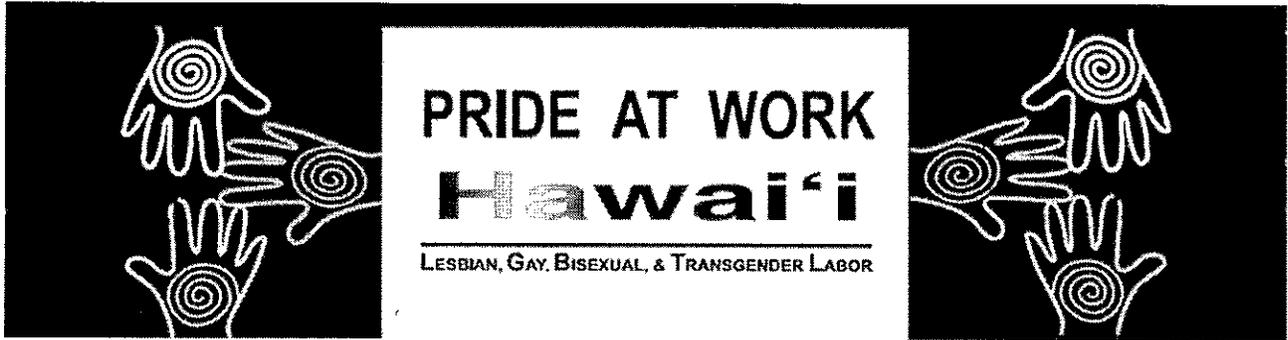
The minimum wage sets the floor for wages in Hawaii. By law, employers may not pay workers less than the minimum, but the fact remains that they often do not pay much more than the minimum either. However, if the wage floor is not increased, wages will continue to be depressed, furthering the disparity among wages in Hawaii.

Increasing the minimum wage will allow more people to move closer to a decent standard of living and allow them to support themselves and their families without having to turn to government for assistance. Indeed, every penny earned by a minimum wage earner, and even the worker earning just above the minimum, will be spent in the community for rent, food, health care, and other goods and services. This will inevitably aid in Hawaii's economic recovery.

It is also important to note that other jurisdictions have minimum wage levels far higher than the federal and Hawaii's minimum. In Washington state, the minimum wage was recently increased to \$9.04, thanks to an automatic adjustment for the cost of living. In San Francisco, from January 1, 2012, the minimum is \$10.24, making San Francisco the first in the nation to mandate a double-digit minimum.

Moving the minimum wage to \$8.25 next year will bring us at or close to the minimum wage in Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Nevada, Oregon, and Vermont--unless, of course, those states enact increases to their minimum wage. The longer we delay, the further behind we will be.

The ILWU strongly urges passage of H.B. 1682. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.



January 24, 2012

House Committee on Labor and Public Employment
Chair, Rep. Karl Rhoads
Vice Chair, Rep. Kyle Yamashita

Testimony in support of HB 1682

Pride At Work Hawai'i, an affiliate of the Hawai'i State AFL-CIO which works to mobilize lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) workers and their supporters for full equality and to build mutual support between the labor movement and the LGBT community, supports HB 1682, which would take the long-overdue step of increasing Hawai'i's minimum wage by \$1.00/hour over the next 18 months.

We also propose adding language to automatically increase the minimum wage annually by no less than the annual increase in the consumer price index for Hawai'i, starting July 1, 2014. We can provide sample language for your consideration if needed.

Hawai'i's current minimum wage of \$7.25 is the same as the federal minimum wage, despite the fact that Hawai'i's cost of living is one of the highest in the US. Someone working 40 hours per week for 52 weeks at the current minimum wage earns a little over \$1,250 a month (or \$15,000 a year) - far less than what anyone could live on in Hawai'i, where average rent for a 2-bedroom unit is over \$1,700. Hawai'i's current minimum wage also hasn't increased since 2007, although the cost of living has increased over 11% in that time.

Hawai'i's poverty-level minimum wage harms the economy by increasing the need for public services and decreasing the ability of low-wage earners to afford basic necessities. It also harms working families, as wage-earners are forced to work more than 40 hours a week to make ends meet, leaving less time for their children. It is also no accident that the gap between rich and poor has increased over the last 40 years while the real value of the minimum wage has dropped dramatically.

Studies have shown that increases to the minimum wage pump more money directly into local economies, stimulating spending and helping local businesses. Minimum wage increases also lead to lower worker turnover at companies, lowering search and training costs and minimizing the additional expense of paying higher wages.

Increasing the minimum wage is especially important for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) workers. Nationally, studies consistently show that LGBT workers are typically paid less than their heterosexual peers.

We strongly urge you to support Hawai'i's economy by supporting Hawai'i's low-income working people and passing this bill. We also urge you to add language to guarantee future increases indexed to the cost of living.

HB 1682

Hearing on January 24, 2012

The Hawaii Restaurant Association stands in opposition to this bill.

Many news reports, both locally and nationally, comment that the economy may improve in 2012. We hope that that is correct and willingly work hard to make it so. However, any increases in operating costs will be detrimental to the overall impact of any positive changes that may take place..

Companies in Hawaii are severely burdened with astronomical cost increases based on the price of oil. As well, also related to skyrocketing costs of oil are our utility costs. A recent report by Hawaii Energy shows that an astounding 79% of Hawaii electricity generation comes from oil. Nationally, electricity generation from oil is a mere 2%.

Any increase in the minimum wage in 2012 would be counterproductive to the vitality, if any, of the State's economic recovery.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger Morey
Executive Director
Hawaii Restaurant Association

yamashita2 ----Aulii

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, January 23, 2012 5:32 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: tomjones@reihawaii.com
Subject: Testimony for HB1682 on 1/24/2012 9:30:00 AM

Testimony for LAB 1/24/2012 9:30:00 AM HB1682

Conference room: 309
Testifier position: Oppose
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Thomas H Jones
Organization: Gyotaku Restaurants
E-mail: tomjones@reihawaii.com
Submitted on: 1/23/2012

Comments:

I urge the committee to defer this bill. Increasing the minimum wage is inflationary. Most of the minimum wage earners in the state actually receive tips or are entry level and get raises soon after being hired. For restaurants with full service, a substantial increase in the tip credit would allow restaurants to increase the wages of those kitchen staff already earning above minimum wage but not allowed to receive tips due to federal legislation.

yamashita2 ----Aulii

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, January 23, 2012 12:58 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: meinoue@hawaii.edu
Subject: Testimony for HB1682 on 1/24/2012 9:30:00 AM

Testimony for LAB 1/24/2012 9:30:00 AM HB1682

Conference room: 309
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Micah Inoue
Organization: Individual
E-mail: meinoue@hawaii.edu
Submitted on: 1/23/2012

Comments:
I support measure as it stands.

yamashita2 ----Aulii

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, January 23, 2012 1:35 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: amina@lifefoundation.org
Subject: Testimony for HB1682 on 1/24/2012 9:30:00 AM

Testimony for LAB 1/24/2012 9:30:00 AM HB1682

Conference room: 309
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Amina Peterson
Organization: Individual
E-mail: amina@lifefoundation.org
Submitted on: 1/23/2012

Comments:

Please note the economic strain put on tax payers by not allowing local residents to earn a livable wage and therefore relying on welfare. The minimum wage should be more than necessary to qualify a 2 person household below the line of poverty.

yamashita2 ----Aulii

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, January 23, 2012 1:40 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: nalowahine96795@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for HB1682 on 1/24/2012 9:30:00 AM

Testimony for LAB 1/24/2012 9:30:00 AM HB1682

Conference room: 309
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: T. Wynn
Organization: Individual
E-mail: nalowahine96795@gmail.com
Submitted on: 1/23/2012

Comments:

I urge all representatives elected to represent Kailua and O'ahu at large to support this measure. It is well known that Hawai'i has an exorbitant cost of living and that our state's residents are not paid commensurate with the cost of living. Two things must occur to obviate the scourge of homelessness in Hawai'i--more affordable housing and a living wage on par with the costs of living here. Raising the minimum wage will also ensure that talent which resides in Hawai'i will remain in our state instead of heeding the allure of moving out-of-state to locales with lower housing rates and commensurate pay. Vote in support of increasing the minimum wage!

yamashita2 ----Aulii

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, January 23, 2012 6:22 PM
To: LABtestimony
Cc: morganthursday@yahoo.com
Subject: Testimony for HB1682 on 1/24/2012 9:30:00 AM

Testimony for LAB 1/24/2012 9:30:00 AM HB1682

Conference room: 309
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Mary Morgan Evans
Organization: Individual
E-mail: morganthursday@yahoo.com
Submitted on: 1/23/2012

Comments:

I strongly support an increase in the minimum wage. It is a shame that we so freely sweep the streets of our homeless, but fail to provide viable options in terms of wages for such individuals to secure housing. As we all know, buying even the necessities in Hawai'i is very expensive, so it just makes sense to have a minimum wage that acknowledges the financial struggles faced by its residents. The local economy cannot thrive if people are broke. Ultimately, a decent minimum wage is good for the entire community. I respectfully urge the passing of this much needed legislation.