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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
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DEPUTY

February 8, 2021

To: The Honorable Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair,
The Honorable Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts

Date: Monday, February 8, 2021
Time: 3:00 p.m.
Place: Conference Room 225, State Capitol

From: Anne Eustaquio, Director
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

Re: S.B. No. 676 RELATING TO MINIMUM WAGE

I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

This measure increases the minimum wage rate from \$10.10 per hour to \$12.00 per hour on July 1, 2022.

II. CURRENT LAW

Act 14 (SLH, 2014) increased the minimum wage rate from \$7.25 per hour in four increments to \$10.10 per hour on January 1, 2018.

III. COMMENTS ON THE SENATE BILL

The Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) Consumer Price Index (CPI) calculator measures the average change over time in the prices paid by urban consumers for a market basket of consumer goods and services. The calculator indicates that the inflation rate from January 1, 2018 to December 2020 was 5%.

The Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC) derives a cost of living index for each state by averaging the indices of participating cities and metropolitan areas in that state on a quarterly basis. Hawaii was ranked the highest according to MERIC in the fourth quarter of 2020. In general, the most expensive areas to live were Hawaii, Alaska, the Northeast, and the West Coast.



MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
VOICE OF BUSINESS

**HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
LABOR, CULTURE & THE ARTS
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, SENATE CONFERENCE ROOM 225
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2021 AT 3:00 PM.**

To The Honorable Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair;
The Honorable Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair; and
Members of the Committee on Labor, Culture & the Arts,

OPPOSE SB676 RELATING TO THE MINIMUM WAGE

Aloha, my name is Pamela Tumpap. I am the President of the Maui Chamber of Commerce, in the county most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of our dependence on the visitor industry and corresponding rate of unemployment. I am writing share our opposition to SB676.

Businesses care deeply about their employees. Many were devastated to have to lay off their employees at the beginning of the pandemic and we have dealt with business owners who were distressed that their employees struggled to get unemployment payments. The goal of employers is to get their employees back to work as quickly as possible and SB676 will hamper this effort, not help.

Now is not the time to increase costs for businesses who are hanging on by a thread, as we are in a global pandemic and severe economic recession, with recovery estimated to take many years. Those who can pay more than the current minimum wage are already doing so. We encourage you to review our 2021 Maui Chamber Legislative Priorities booklet, sent to you on January 26th, that shows how many people are estimated to make above the minimum wage in Hawaii.

Mahalo for your consideration of our testimony and ask that you please defer this bill.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.



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Date: February 6, 2021
To: Sen. Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair
Sen. Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Labor, Culture, and Arts
From: Victor Lim, Legislative Lead
Subj: SB 676 Relating to Minimum wage

The Hawaii Restaurant Association representing 3,400 restaurants here in Hawaii opposes SB 676 Relating to Minimum Wage.

Most restaurant operators here do not expect business conditions to improve much in the coming years and 43% say it is unlikely their restaurant will still be in business six months from now without additional relief packages from the federal government. To say that many businesses here in Hawaii are in dire straits will be an understatement.

The restaurant industry is probably one of the most hard hit by this pandemic and needs time to recover. All experts point to the fact that our State Economy will take at least 3-4 years to recover. We cannot easily absorb this labor cost increase when you compound with other increases coming from state and federal on Unemployment Insurance rates, Paid Leave provisions, utilities cost increases due to oil price hikes, etc.

By raising the floor to \$ 12/hr, you also force everyone that is at that level to go even higher due to the compression need for adjustment, resulting in cost increases for everyone at this time when businesses can least afford to absorb or pass it thru to the consumers who are also challenged with disposal income. This is not the time.

Thank you for allowing us to share our situation and position on this.





Chamber of Commerce HAWAII

The Voice of Business

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Labor, Culture, and the Arts
Monday, February 8, 2021 at 3:00 P.M.
Via Videoconference**

RE: SB 676, RELATING TO THE MINIMUM WAGE

Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Ihara, Jr., and Members of the Committee:

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber") **respectfully opposes SB 676 which increases the minimum wage.**

The Chamber is Hawaii's leading statewide business advocacy organization, representing 2,000+ 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 members and the entire business community to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

The enactment of a minimum wage increase 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 closing their doors, bankruptcy, or laying off employees. As evidenced by recent media accounts in a COVID-19 pandemic, many local establishments, some of which have faithfully served consumers for generations, are going out of business.

Oftentimes not discussed when speaking about minimum wage is the cost of healthcare. Hawaii is the only state with a prepaid healthcare mandate for employees that work 20 hours or more with annual fixed costs averaging \$6,000 per employee. Costs continue to rise, while the percentage that an employee contributes remains the same. Healthcare costs are often overlooked as an employee benefit when talking about the costs of doing business.

Additionally, an increase in wages is tied to increased costs for other mandates, such as workers' compensation, temporary disability, unemployment insurance, payroll taxes and other voluntary benefit programs. Add this up and we are talking about more than \$17 per hour.

Now is not the time to increase the wage. Rather, now is the time to focus on economic recovery and save small businesses that are already struggling from the ongoing impact of COVID-19 pandemic.

In a new Pulse of Business survey¹ conducted in partnership with Omnitrak and with the support of Central Pacific Bank Foundation, the Hawaii Chamber of Commerce Foundation found the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have dramatic consequences for local businesses. The Pulse of Business results are not surprising and that one primary issue facing businesses is the cost of paying higher unemployment taxes in 2020 while they continue to suffer from the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Pulse of Business survey found that:

- Eighty percent of the businesses that participated in the survey are small businesses with 20 or fewer employees.
- Island companies face a long road to recovery that they expect will extend into April 2022.
- Revenues fell an average of 45% from 2019 to 2020, with no significant differences between Oahu and neighbor isles.
- Almost half (45%) reduced their workforce. The percentage would have been higher (63%) if businesses had not received federal Paycheck Protection Program funds.
- Businesses that had to cut jobs laid off a median of one in three workers in 2020. On neighbor isles, cuts were even greater, with five in nine employees laid off due to the pandemic.
- Many local businesses attributed a drastic drop in revenue to waning tourism, even if they were not directly involved in the visitor industry. A drop in visitor arrivals was the single most important factor impacting employee cutbacks.

National data has differed on their opinion of the effects that an increase in the minimum wage could have on employers and their businesses. However, should this bill pass, it will no doubt harm local businesses, the state economy, job creation and, potentially, the very employees it is trying to help.

A Minimum Wage Increase is not a One-Size Fits All Fix

The number of small businesses across the Hawaii vary from the size of the business, to the number of employees or even the products and goods that they sell. A rise of the minimum wage will have an impact that will be felt throughout the small business community. We have heard from many members regarding what would happen to their businesses if the minimum wage were to be increased. Some of our members have said that their businesses would be

¹ Survey finds Hawaii businesses reeling from lost revenue, cutting jobs, and expecting a long road to recovery
<https://www.staradvertiser.com/2021/02/02/breaking-news/survey-finds-hawaii-businesses-reeling-from-lost-revenue-cutting-jobs-and-expecting-a-long-road-to-recovery/>

able to absorb the additional costs of an increase in minimum wage. However, we have heard from other members who have raised concerns on what sort of impact these new increases will have on their businesses.

One of the business owners that we have heard from, someone who has owned a restaurant for over 30 years and employs around 25 workers has indicated that even the smallest increase being considered for a minimum wage increase will cost them nearly \$45,000 more on hourly wages in the first year. This owner has also indicated that most likely they will need to raise prices, cut back on the premium health care that their business currently offers, and most likely also cut hours. This is also an owner that has used his business to help contribute millions of dollars to charitable causes in Hawaii through fundraisers, donations and other efforts throughout the years.

We hope that lawmakers will take this into account when considering the impact that a minimum wage would have on small businesses across the state.

Minimum Wage vs. Living Wage

Recently, when considering a minimum wage increase, proponents have tied it to the argument that workers need to be making a livable wage. The Chamber understands and empathizes with working families and the challenges that they face with the high cost of living in Hawaii. That is why we believe we need to look at the whole picture of factors that are affecting workers here in Hawaii. A minimum wage increase is not going to be the silver bullet that will fix all of Hawaii's cost of living problems. Living wage is a complex, multifaceted issue and we need to take a hard look at solving issues such as lack of available and affordable housing, and reliance on imported goods and energy when considering a living wage.

Other Important Factors for Consideration

Increasing the minimum wage will also greatly affect job opportunities, especially for new, unskilled workers. In addition to traditional adult workers changing industries, young adult workers also often receive their initial work experience by starting at unskilled jobs. As mentioned previously in our testimony, business owners are telling us that raising the minimum wage will result in some businesses having to cut salaries and positions and raise prices on their products. Raising wages does put more money into circulation of the economy; however, it also can lead to fewer jobs, fewer hours worked for employees, and in some cases, the loss of the business entirely.



Chamber *of* Commerce HAWAII

The Voice of Business

While we understand the intent of a minimum wage increase, a minimum wage increase will undermine efforts to recover Hawaii's stagnant economy. Hawaii's business community is at a critical point and asking for government policies that offers them the relief to stay in business and keep employees working.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.



Testimony on SB676

Highway Inn Opposes an Increase in Minimum Wage to \$12 on July 1st, 2022.

Highway Inn's employees already earn more than \$15 per hour because that is what the market for restaurant labor in Hawaii demands. Businesses need more flexibility to compensate their staff, not less.

The MOST IMPORTANT fact to understand is that in Full-Service Restaurants, most workers who earn minimum wage receive *significantly* more compensation in tips. In fact, in 2017, a full-time server reported over \$72,000 in income on her W2. SB676 & similar bills create unintended and harmful consequences to employees, businesses, customers, and the local economy.

Moreover, Hawaii's employers also provide mandated healthcare for qualifying employees at almost \$1,000 per older employee per month. We also have Paid-Time-Off and make 401(k) Contributions. We also have a kitchen service charge, introduced when tip pooling prohibited businesses from sharing a portion of gratuities to the kitchen staff that adds between \$1 and \$4 per kitchen employee.

SB676 will dampen the economy's recovery. Here is what will happen:

1. Restaurants will raise prices according to the increase in labor costs:
 - a. The minimum wage increase's main recipients will be the highest compensated labor group that makes minimum plus additional gratuities of \$15-\$25 an hour.
2. Demand for restaurant meals will fall. Restaurants will earn less income than the increase in prices, and probably less overall because consumers have less expensive choices.
 - a. Restaurants will order fewer supplies, require less labor & seek more labor-saving pivots
 - b. Businesses compliance with income and labor reporting reqs. will decrease – we already lose employees to other enterprises paying staff 'off the books' & not reporting income
3. DoTax GET receipts, State-Tax, and other State income sources will fall as restaurants downsize.
4. Customer choice will diminish and tourists will have fewer places to spend their \$s.

Restaurants are competitive businesses for both customers and labor. Government has recently learned that direct and targeted assistance to disadvantaged workers is the most effective form of economic aid and companies are not good proxies for government work as illustrated in 1-4 above.

There are already two established mechanisms to successfully manage wages at restaurants: using Federally approved Tipped Wages and permitting Tip Pooling among *all* staff. We strongly recommend a meaningful implementation of these laws here in Hawaii to reinvigorate our local restaurant businesses.

The CBO recently estimated that an increase in the minimum wage to \$15 an hour would cause 1.3 million workers to lose their jobs. Hawaii needs to perform a similar analysis.

Thank you for allowing us to share our perspective on this critically important issue.



1050 Bishop St. PMB 235 | Honolulu, HI 96813
P: 808-533-1292 | e: info@hawaiiifood.com

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TO:

Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts
Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 8, 2021
TIME: 3pm
PLACE: Via Videoconference

RE: SB676 Relating to Minimum Wage

Position: Oppose

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

HFIA is in opposition to this measure. The fact is that raising minimum wage will force more Hawaii businesses to cut staff and close. Our state has been the hardest hit by the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. We have already seen dozens of businesses close. Many local businesses that have been job providers and staples in their communities for years have now closed their doors for good.

Large national chains have weathered this storm because they can take advantage of economy of scale and rely on profits from the mainland where they have not suffered the economic losses that we have here. Local businesses do not have these options. An increase in minimum wage now will disproportionately impact these local Hawaii businesses, and for some this will be one challenge too many for them to overcome.

Raising minimum wage at a time when it will cause businesses to close and eliminate jobs is self-defeating. In order to continue providing jobs, serving their communities, paying taxes, and driving the local economy our local business need time to recover. This bill is not the right choice right now and we ask that it be held. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

February 7, 2021

RE: SB676 RELATING TO MINIMUM WAGE

Dear Chair Taniguchi and the Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts,

The Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce **opposes** SB676 RELATING TO MINIMUM WAGE.

With nearly 500 members, our Chamber represents the business community in the Kona and Kohala districts on the west side of Hawai'i Island where the tourism industry drives the local economy. **Our businesses were especially hard hit in 2020 due to COVID-19 impacts that resulted in substantial loss of business.**

Although the Safe Travels Hawai'i Program allows for travelers to bypass the now 10-day quarantine with a negative COVID-19 test result, **the visitor count (our customer base) continues to be extremely low.** According to the Hawai'i Tourism Authority December 2020 Hawai'i Hotel Performance Report, the occupancy for the Kohala Coast, where our major resorts are located, was at 26.8% in 2020 compared to 79% in 2019 – a 52.2% difference. This significant decrease is felt throughout our local economy as low occupancy continues to create high unemployment in our area. Additionally, our small businesses that contribute to the visitor experience (retail, restaurants, farming, fishing, activities and tours) are finding it very difficult to navigate through the economic downturn. Many have greatly reduced operations or gone into hibernation while others have closed.

Based on the recent University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization's Annual Hawai'i Forecast, Hawai'i Island visitor arrivals by air in 2019 were at 1,763,900 million, but the 2020 count is 462,300 – a change of -73.8%! The forecast projects only 766,100 visitors in 2021 for Hawai'i Island. This means that our businesses will continue to struggle because these businesses will continue to have a significant reduction in customers.

This is going to be another tough year for our businesses and they will not be ready by July 1, 2022 to increase pay from \$10.10 to \$12 per hour as stated in SB676. **This is not the time to increase the cost of doing business. This is the time to create policies for Hawai'i's economic recovery so that businesses can survive into the future and provide jobs.**

The Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce exists to provide leadership and advocacy for a successful business environment in West Hawai'i.

Sincerely,



Wendy J. Laros
President and CEO, Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts
Monday, February 8th, 2021 at 3:00pm
Conference Room 225, State Capitol
RE: SB676 Relating to the Minimum Wage**

Position: Comments

Members of the Labor Committee:

Hawaii's Minimum Wage Falls Short

While [\\$17 per hour](#) is needed for full-time workers to afford their basic needs, Hawaii's minimum wage is only [\\$10.10 per hour](#). More than [150,000 full-time workers](#) in Hawaii earn less than the \$35,000 that's needed to make ends meet. The [national](#) and local [Hawaii](#) Democratic Party platforms both call for a \$15 minimum wage. [8 states](#) are on their way to a \$15+ minimum wage.

Raising the Wage Helps Workers, Small Businesses and our Economy

When the minimum wage increased from \$7.25 in 2014 to \$10.10 in 2018, workers at all income levels saw their earnings [increase](#) faster than wages nationwide. This was a change from the previous four years when local wages grew [slower](#) than wages nationally.

With workers earning more money and spending it here locally, from 2014 to 2018, the number of small businesses in Hawaii [increased](#) as did their number of employees. Unemployment was also near [all time lows in 2018](#). Hawaii's economy grew at a [faster rate](#) from 2014-2018 than when the minimum wage was stagnant. Our local economy's growth was faster than the [nation's economic growth](#) over that time also.

Democrats Support a \$15+ Minimum Wage Nationally

President Joe Biden and national Democrats are pushing hard to make a \$15 minimum wage a reality by 2025. Republicans could stand in the way of this bill becoming law, but with a Democratic supermajority in Hawaii, we can make this a reality on our own. Both the national and Hawaii Democratic parties support this.

Please amend this bill to provide Hawaii workers with a \$17 minimum wage by 2026



Before the Senate Committee on Labor, Culture & the Arts

DATE: February 8, 2021

TIME: 3:00 p.m.

PLACE: Conference Room 225

Re: SB 676, Relating to the Minimum Wage

Aloha Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Ihara, and members of the committee:

We are testifying on behalf of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) in opposition to SB 676, relating to the minimum wage.

No one has greater incentive, responsibility or ability to lead the economy than Hawaii's small business owners. Small businesses play a major role in the economy, representing 99% of all employer firms, employing about half of private-sector employees and generating 63% to 80% of net new jobs annually. Though 2020 is now behind us, there isn't much joy among small businesses as they strive to stay open and save jobs. Federal stimulus programs were welcomed assistance and overall effective as a "bridge" to economic recovery. And though consumers were given a substantial income boost, regulations and uncertainty kept much of it from being spent. Many small firms depend on foot traffic, which continues to be widely discouraged due to the pandemic or outright prohibited. In short, small business is struggling to survive.

Small business owners know that increasing the minimum wage to \$12 per hour will lead to increased labor costs and tough choices. They must either increase the cost of their product or service or reduce labor costs elsewhere. The reduction in labor costs would be achieved through reduced jobs, reduced hours, or reduced benefits. We respectfully oppose this measure.

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 hundreds of small businesses. 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



To: Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts
Attn: Chair Brian Taniguchi, Vice Chair Les Ihara Jr, and Committee members

Hawaii Workers Center Testimony for February 8, 2021, Committee hearing
Supporting With Amendments, SB676 Relating to Minimum Wage, Which Would Raise the Minimum Wage For All Employees Except Those Covered Under HRS 387-9 From \$10.10/hr to \$12/hr in July 1, 2022.

The Hawaii Workers Center (HWC) is a resource and organizing center which addresses the issues and concerns of low-wage workers and immigrants. For the past 6 months, we have been publicly advocating for unemployed workers, urging the Department of Labor & Industrial Relations (DLIR) to reopen its unemployment offices and provide safe, direct, in-person services for the thousands of workers who have been furloughed or permanently laid off since March 2020. Given the poor condition of DLIR's archaic mainframe computer, the difficulty of submitting a claim, and the department's failure to be responsive to claimants' emails and phone calls, direct servicing is urgent and essential.

We sincerely appreciate that the committee is willing to hear a bill to raise the minimum wage despite pressures to look to austerity as an economic and political solution. But while raising the wage to \$12/hr in 2022 is helpful, it's not enough for working class families who were already working multiple jobs and struggling to survive in the State with the highest cost of living before the pandemic. This has become harder to do in the pandemic when your hours are being cut or you've lost your job, and you might need to stay at home to protect your health and the health of your family members.

To begin to seriously address the immediate needs of workers and their families, the Hawaii Workers Center offers the following amendment: **Raise the minimum wage to \$15/hr by 2022 to make up for the increases that should have been made as cost of living went up, until it reaches \$17/hr by 2026. These increases should be gradual rather than enacted at just one time so that workers can immediately start**

to use the wage increases to pay the bills, as well as use what's left over to spend on local businesses and to save up to have a financial foundation to weather the pandemic and beyond. This would be a win for working class families and the economy.

Raising the minimum wage would be the real thank you that essential workers in retail, fast food, caregiving, teaching, etc deserve. For those who are already making \$15 or higher, this would give them the opportunity to raise the floor on their own wages. We would see more people able to pursue creative interests, open up small businesses, live less stressful lives, buy homes, and spend more time with their families if they had to worry less about their economic futures.

Alongside a minimum wage increase for current workers, we also need to extend relief to the workers who are currently unemployed, furloughed, and have yet to be rehired/recalled back to their jobs. There are many who still have been unable to file unemployment claims or who are having trouble with their current claims. We need to continue to urge the DLIR Director and other state officials to implement solutions like safely reopening DLIR offices in each county for direct in-person services, resolving staffing shortages and technological issues/inadequacies at the Unemployment Insurance office, and opening up public access computers in libraries with trained staff. This will help ensure that unemployed workers can be served directly so that they can get assistance as needed and answers to their questions, allowing for more families to be able to finally receive some relief and have their frustrations resolved.

One Job Should Be Enough!

Submitted by Rev. Sam Domingo, John Witeck, and Jun Shin of the Hawaii Workers Center

Phone Number: 808-255-6663

Email: hiworkerscenter@gmail.com

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 4:37:06 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Christy MacPherson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support SB676 with an amendment that the minimum wage be increased to \$17 by 2026. We are years behind already, but with our current economy this would be the reasonable compromise to ensure that our islanders can at least survive and remain in Hawai'i.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 4:56:30 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lisa Gibson	Testifying for Warren & Annabelle's	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha,

My husband and I own a small business here in Hawaii. Before COVID we had about 20 employees. We've been in business over 21 years but we are still closed due to COVID. We would like to reopen as soon as possible and bring back as many employees as we can. Being the hardest hit state in the U.S., now is not the time to further burdern already damaged businesses with higher costs like increasing minimum wages. Before COVID, we were paying an additional \$7200 PER employee per year for our employees health insurance. PLEASE do not ignore this financial fact. Now is not the time to increase minimum wage. Hawaii's businesses are struggling and barely making ends meet, or like us, are still closed and trying to get back reopened but the forces are against us between mandates, this bill and the UI rate increase bill.

Please, our State Representatives, realize many of us are hurting badly as business owners. We are not national chain companies. We are not the evil rich guy. We are your neighbors, friends and family members. We are the lifeblood of this state's economy. Many of us have not received a paycheck in close to a year. PLEASE LET THAT SINK IN.

Now is not the time to burdern us further. We are not the evil rich guy. Clearly, we and other businesses will not be able to hire as many people as before, and businesses will need to lay off employees because you want to raise minimum wage. Please defer increasing minimum wage until a much later year when the economy is flourishing again.

Mahalo.

Respectfully,

Lisa Gibson

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 5:54:18 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Will Caron	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha committee members,

While I support the intent of SB676 to increase the minimum wage, which has been stuck at \$10.10 since 2018, I must strongly urge the committee chair to amend the language in this bill from seeking a \$12 minimum wage by 2022 to seeking a \$17 minimum wage by 2026. This is because passing the bill as-is virtually guarantees that the minimum wage will remain stuck at \$12 until 2026, and that is simply unacceptable.

Hawai'i's working families power our economy. Without their spending, we can literally feel the impacts on the state budget, shrinking it to the point that devastating cuts and furloughs that would knee-cap our economic recovery are being pushed as "inevitable" by the governor. This is nonsense. Government exists to create public policy that will benefit all of us, not just the wealthy few, not just business owners who don't want to pay their workers a fair wage--all of us. And what will truly benefit all of us is if every single working person in the state is earning enough to cover their basic needs.

Our economy would immediately see an influx of activity and our state's tax revenue would swell, rendering cuts and furloughs unnecessary (particularly if paired with the Hawaii Tax Fairness Coalition's revenue raising proposals targeting wealthy individuals and corporations). This is my fourth session testifying on a minimum wage increase bill, and I am so tired of hearing the lies and misinformation trumpeted by the Chamber of Commerce and the Hawai'i Restaurant Association. The selfishness and greed of those institutions is irresponsible and threatens the health of our entire society.

Minimum wage increases have been studied to death, and every single reputable source confirms that staggered wage hikes, like those proposed in a \$17 by 2026 amended bill, are good for the economy, good for businesses and good for working people. There is zero defensible reason not to pass such a bill this session. We must raise up Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

TO: Committee on Labor, Culture, & the Arts

FROM: Adrian Hong, President of Island Plastic Bags, Inc.

RE: SB 676 Relating to the Minimum Wage

POSITION: STONGLY OPPOSE

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong opposition to SB 676. My name is Adrian Hong and I am the president of Island Plastic Bags Inc. (IPB), a second-generation, family business in Halawa Valley that manufactures plastic trash liners and food grade bags. Now is not the time to increase minimum wage in the State of Hawaii given the incredible struggles that small businesses are suffering because of the pandemic.

At the onset of the pandemic, I told my employees that we would not lay anyone off because of the pandemic. I told them that they would still have all their health and 401K benefits. Almost a year on, we have kept that promise but it has been by no means easy. 2020 was the worst year on record for our company. Our revenues in 2020 were down 36% compared to the previous year.

While a PPP loan and the Small Business Recovery & Relief Fund grant we received helped tremendously, we are still very far away from operating at a sustainable level of revenues. The absolute last thing we need is more taxes on our struggling business. The harder you make it for small businesses, the less of them will survive the pandemic. That will cost the state jobs, tax revenues, and a more vibrant and diverse economy in the future.

I understand that as legislators that you only have difficult decisions ahead of you this session, but I urge you to think of what will happen if more small businesses go under. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong opposition to SB 676. Should you have any questions or comments about my testimony you can contact me by email at ahong@islandplasticbags.com or by phone at 808-484-4046.

Sincerely,

Adrian K. Hong, CPA*

President

Island Plastic Bags, Inc.

www.islandplasticbags.com

Email: ahong@islandplasticbags.com | Phone: 808-484-4046 | Fax: 808-488-8505

*Not in public practice



February 5, 2021

To: Honorable Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair
Honorable Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts
Hawaii State Legislature
31st State Legislature, Regular Session of 2021

Date: Monday, February 8, 2021
Time: 3:00 pm
Place: State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Conferene Room 225

From: Wayne Hikiji, President
Envisions Entertainment & Productions, Inc.

RE: Opposition to SB 676 Relating to the Minimum Wage

My name is Wayne Hikiji and I am the president of *Envisions Entertainment & Productions, Inc.* ("*Envisions*"), an event production company based in Kahului, Maui. We have been in business for 25 years and prior to the pandemic had 20 full-time employees who have been us between 16-25 years, 20-25 part-time seasonal workers and contracted between 115-120 independent contractors annually. Because of the Pandemic, we have furloughed all but 11 of our full-time key employees.

We strenuously oppose SB 676 which would increase the minimum wage to \$12 per hour beginning July 1, 2022. While SB 676 may be well-intended, enacting such an increase while we are still in the midst of an unprecedented pandemic will have a lasting negative impact on countless small business like ours who are trying desperately to stay afloat.

Economists predict that our economy will take several years to recover from the aftermath of this public health and economic crisis. Consequently, such a bill would be especially concerning for special events businesses like ours who have been literally shuttered since mid-March, experiencing an unprecedented 97.5% drop in revenue from April – December, 2020. We are only now seeing short term business trickle in that is still well below the revenue levels we need to pay our monthly payroll, medical premiums, rent and other essential expenses.

This legislative sessions, small businesses are also facing the prospects of Unemployment tax increases that may double, if not triple, this year.

In short, we simply cannot afford any increase at least until our economy returns to pre-pandemic levels. Therefore, I humbly ask that this Legislature pause any bill to increase the minimum wage until our economy becomes robust enough to sustain such an increase.

Statement Before The
SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, CULTURE & THE ARTS
Monday, February 8, 2021
3:00 PM
Conference Room 225

in consideration of
SB 676
RELATING TO THE MINIMUM WAGE.

Chair TANIGUCHI, Vice Chair IHARA, and Members of the Senate Labor, Culture & The Arts Committee

Common Cause Hawaii provides comments in support of SB 676 which increases the minimum wage for certain employees to \$12.00 per hour beginning 7/1/2022.

Common Cause Hawaii is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to reforming government and strengthening democracy - one that works for everyone and not just the special interests.

Common Cause Hawaii understands that when every employee is paid a minimum wage that is a living wage, the benefits flow to families, communities, and our state as a whole. Increasing the minimum wage to \$12 per hour beginning July 1, 2022 is a start and will help Hawaii's people and help to ensure a healthy, vibrant democracy. Please consider increasing the minimum wage even more. There are seven states (California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, and New Jersey) that will have \$15 per hour minimum wage in the next few years. See <https://minimumwage.com/2020/12/80-states-and-localities-will-see-minimum-wage-hikes-in-2021/>.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of SB 676 and to request consideration of increasing the minimum wage even more. If you have further questions of me, please contact me at sma@commoncause.org.

Very respectfully yours,

Sandy Ma
Executive Director, Common Cause Hawaii

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 6:58:06 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

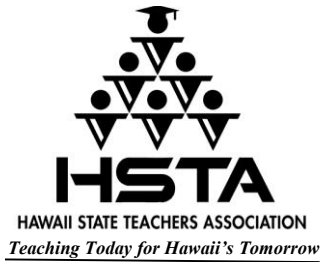
Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
John & Rita Shockley	Testifying for FREE ACCESS COALITION	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha!

Everyone needs free access to a living wage. The tired old opposition says businesses will go broke doesn't hold water. Perhaps you don't need a minimum wage, but there is a large percentage of the people who voted for you who need this financial help. They voted for you--you need to vote for them. Support SB 676.

John & Rita Shockley www.freeaccesscoalition.weebly.com



1200 Ala Kapuna Street ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96819
Tel: (808) 833-2711 ♦ Fax: (808) 839-7106 ♦ Web: www.hsta.org

Corey Rosenlee
President
Osa Tui Jr.
Vice President
Logan Okita
Secretary-Treasurer
Wilbert Holck
Executive Director

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
LABOR, CULTURE & THE ARTS

RE: SB 676 - RELATING TO MINIMUM WAGE

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2021

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

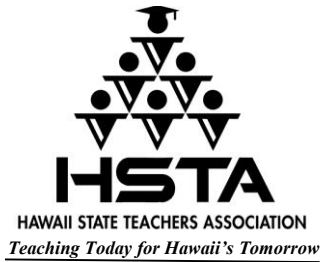
Chair Taniguchi and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **supports SB 676**, relating to minimum wage, **with the suggested amendments**.

Our minimum wage workers earn only \$21,000 a year (working full time at \$10.10 per hour) while facing the highest cost of living in the nation. For example, a Hawaii minimum wage worker would have to work 109 hours per week just to pay rent for a 1-bedroom apartment.

This bill as written will increase the minimum wage to \$12 in 2022. However, according to DBEDT, the self-sufficiency income standard for a single person with no children and employer-provided health insurance in 2016 was \$15.84 per hour, which comes out to \$17 in 2019 and it keeps climbing. Thus we would ask **also to amend the language to allow 5 steps to reach \$17 per hour as our minimum wage in Hawaii by 2026.**

- (6) \$9.25 per hour beginning January 1, 2017; [~~and~~]
- (7) \$10.10 per hour beginning January 1, 2018[.];
- (8) \$12.00 per hour beginning July 1, 2022;
- (9) \$13.25 per hour beginning July 1, 2023;
- (10) \$14.50 per hour beginning July 1, 2024;
- (11) \$15.75 per hour beginning July 1, 2025;



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Vice President

Logan Okita
Secretary-Treasurer

Wilbert Holck
Executive Director

(12) \$17.00 per hour beginning July 1, 2026; and

Our minimum wage has been falling further behind inflation since Jan. 1, 2018, the last time the wage was increased. The minimum wage in 17 states plus DC have automatic inflation adjustments, which would be a smart idea as well, as it would already be set in motion, thus we would not have to keep fighting to raise minimum wage to keep up with inflation time after time. So that is another amendment that should be considered and applied.

Research shows that higher wages are good for businesses, too. **In Hawai'i, between 2015 and 2018, our minimum wage increased by 39 percent while our unemployment rate dropped and restaurants hired more servers, despite minimum wage being raised. That's because higher wages improve worker morale, productivity and loyalty, and retention, which saves employers the costs associated with constantly hiring and training new employees. It is important to note that any extra money paid to minimum wage workers is plowed right back into local businesses, leading to a positive ripple effect across our economy.**

To provide a living wage to all workers in Hawaii, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill with suggested amendments.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 11:08:35 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Greg Hanna	Testifying for 7-Eleven Hawaii, Inc.	Oppose	No

Comments:

Raising the minimum wage will not help the entry level worker or their family achieve what the supporters of this bill are thinking. Their wage will increase but there are other ramifications to them and others that must be considered. Listed below are a few that come to mind:

- The increased wage cost to businesses will ultimately be passed onto the consumer
- We will see business closures especially for the mom & pop retailers
- Employers will reduce the hours of their employees
- Employee jobs will be eliminated
- The unemployment rate will increase
- The unemployment taxes (State - SUI and Federal - FUTA) for the employers will increase
- The workers compensation insurance costs will increase for employers

Please think this through.



Saturday, 06 February 2021

To: Senator Brian Taniguchi, Chair
Senator Les Ihara Jr., Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts

From: Edna Ching, Chief Strategy Officer – Seven-Eleven Hawaii, Inc.

RE: SB 676 Relating to the Minimum Wage – In Opposition
February 8, 2021; 3:00pm; Conference Room 225

Seven-Eleven Hawaii, Inc. is in opposition to SB 676 which increases the minimum wage to \$12 per hour effective July 1, 2022. The State of Hawaii continues to be challenged by the current pandemic. Many businesses and residents are still experiencing extreme financial hardships. This bill will impose additional burdens prolonging our State from full recovery.

Increasing the minimum wage next year will impact multiple layers of the State's economy. The move will increase workers compensation insurance. Ultimately, the burden will be placed on the employers, disproportionately hurting small businesses and especially "mom and pop" shops. The food industry in multiple counties are already facing increases to the cost of doing businesses with recent legislation that passed like Oahu County's Bill 40, relating to plastic.

To survive this minimum wage increase, businesses will need to make difficult decisions amid a struggling economy:

- Reduction in labor hours
- Reduction to the number of employees resulting in unemployment tax increases
- Increasing prices which would hurt those living in low-income neighborhoods and those who have recently lost their jobs due to the pandemic
- Closing shop indefinitely

For the above reasons, we ask that you not pass this measure. Mahalo.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 11:07:45 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Evelyn Aczon Hao	Testifying for Faith Action for Community Equity	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Senator Taniguchi,

Please amend the bill to include language pushing the minimum wage to \$17/hr by 2026.

Both businesses *and* workers need each other. A raise in the minimum wage will not only be good for workers but also for the economy, thus small business owners. We must do everything we can to prevent evictions, rising homelessness, and closing businesses.

We do this by putting more money in workers' pockets so they can pay their rent, buy food, and pay for other needs. This will help businesses stay afloat. Not doing this act of courage and care will result in a downward spiral which will be difficult to stop.

Please do everything you can to prevent despair and create hope.

Thank you, Evelyn Hao



SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAI'I

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

February 8, 2021 3:00 PM

In SUPPORT of SB 676: Relating to the Minimum Wage

Aloha Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Ihara, and members of the committee,

On behalf of our 27,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **supports SB 676 with amendments to increase the minimum wage to \$17 per hour by 2026.**

Since 1968, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i has worked to help people explore, enjoy, and protect the unique natural environment of the Hawaiian Islands. We know that there is a nexus between the environment and economic justice issues and that a healthy environment depends on a healthy economic system. That is why we support raising the minimum wage to a more livable wage.

This bill will raise the minimum wage in Hawai'i, helping to address income inequality and create a more equitable system for all of Hawai'i's residents. The current minimum wage is vastly insufficient to cover basic needs. This forces more and more families to live paycheck-to-paycheck and make short-term decisions about their lives that usually impose a greater burden on the natural environment. Residents surviving on minimum wage salaries are more likely to live in areas with greater pollution and waste. Families struggling to make ends meet will be less empowered to seek justice when their communities are threatened, because they are too busy putting food on the table and paying rent.

The current minimum wage reinforces our income inequality and perpetuates environmental injustice. We support raising the wage to \$17 per hour because we know that with a more balanced economic system, Hawai'i's residents, our communities, and our environment as a whole will prosper. Let's give our working families a raise and increase the minimum wage.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to provide testimony in **support of SB 676.**

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 10:03:02 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Gary T. Yoshioka	Testifying for Diamond Bakery Co., Ltd.	Oppose	No

Comments:

Dear Committe leaders and member,

Now is not the time to increase the minimum wage to \$12. With the decimation of our tourism and tourism-related commerce and the unprecedented impact to our economy, increasing labor costs by 19% with this bill is not wise. Local businesses are barely surviving with many having already closed for good. Keep the businesses open for jobs that give paychecks. We can look at wages once we have economic momentum.

At Diamond Bakery, we have made it part of our strategy to pay our employees fairly, and we have increased wages as a result. But we do it because our team delivers results to support the wages. Results are hard to come by in this pandemic for many many businesses. Please relook at your timing and the reality of our dire economic circumstances. Mahalo nui loa.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 5:58:04 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Wendy Arbeit	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support this bill and request that it be amended to contain incremental increases until it reaches \$17 per hour in 2026. I also suggest that the committee amend the bill to include annual increases consistent with cost of living rises.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 5:54:50 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
TOM DIGRAZIA	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

It is time to get financially real in Hawaii nei. Twelve dollars an hour as a minimum wage is a good start, especially if there was an amendment to the bill that included annual cost of living increases. I strongly support SB 676.

Mahalo,

Tom

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 5:59:42 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Teresa Gardner	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SUPPORT with amendments to increase the minimum wage to \$17 per hour and mandate annual cost of living adjustments

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 5:58:56 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Patricia Blair	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Absolutely increase! People got to live!

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 6:05:52 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Thomas Brandt	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Support

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 5:59:49 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Barbara L. George	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

STRONGLY SUPPORT!! But this is only a start toward what is necessary and PONO. Please build in steady increases toward \$17/hour AND include an automatic increase yearly to match increases in the cost of living.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 6:54:20 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Rev. Samuel L Domingo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in support of any bill that would raise the minimum wage. Its always a strong message that recognizes the plight of many; in fact half of our people are living at the edge of making basic ends meet. I propose that this bill be amended to raise the minimum wage to \$17/ hr by 2026, which is the figure that is needed now. We cannot allow our people to further fall behind!

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 6:23:20 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Bonnie Ozaki	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SUPPORT with amendments to increase the minimum wage to \$17 per hour and mandate annual cost of living adjustments. It is time to really help Hawaii's citizens who are working for minimum wages. While \$17/hr is not a liveable wage, it can be a lifeline for many struggling families. Please do not fail to address this urgent need. I would also support an implementation date earlier than the 2022 one proposed.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Ozaki

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 6:09:48 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
L.M. Holmes	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I very strongly support raising the minimum wage as soon as possible; this bill is a step in the right direction, though such a modest increase should be viewed as only the first step. Everywhere the minimum wage has been raised, it has been beneficial to both workers and business. Mahalo.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 6:16:12 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Christina Lee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support SB676, raising the minimum wage to \$12. This is not nearly enough to make a living wage in Hawaii, but it is certainly a good start. Thank you.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 6:08:11 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lori Adolewski	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Increasing the minimum wage in Hawaii to \$12 per hour is a step in the right direction. I have heard that a person needs \$17 per hour and 40 hours work a week to live minimally in Hawaii.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 6:20:07 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Daniel R Freund	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I continue to wonder why a legislature dominated by Democrats hasn't already raised the minimum wage to \$15 (or, taking the Hawaii cost of living into account, even higher). This bill is a disappointing start toward a living wage but it *is* a start. So I write in support.

Better still, amend this bill to make up for the ***eight years*** (2007-2015) when the minimum did not go up at all and provide for a further \$1.25 increase on July 1, 2023, and each year thereafter until the minimum reaches \$17/hour.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 6:22:05 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Christine Urban	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am supporting raising the minimum wage - should be at least \$15 per hour - especially in Hawaii given our cost of living.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 6:21:15 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Barbara Barry	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly support an increase in the minimum wage in Hawaii. Seriously, I don't know how anyone can live on 12.00 per hour though. I suggest 15.00 per hour should be adopted with incremental increases to 17.00 per hour over the next few years. This has proven to be very helpful in the areas that have raised their minimum wage to 15.00, without the threat of businesses closing down.

Our current wage is poverty level as is 12.00 per hour considering the high cost of living in the Islands. Too many people are struggling to survive in Hawai'i. An increase of the minimum wage will lift people out of poverty. Let's lead with our hearts.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Barbara

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 8:10:12 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jonathan Cender	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

It has been a while since the last increase of the minimum wage. It is time to increase it again. I support increasing to 12\$ an hour although I think the increase is too small.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 7:24:23 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Susan Scott	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support the bill and I'm asking that the bill be amended to continue incremental increases until it reaches \$17 per hour in 2026. I am also suggesting that the committee amend the bill to include annual increases to keep up with the basic cost of living.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 6:23:08 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kathy Shimata	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha! Lucky we live Hawaii! However, the cost of housing & everything else is higher than most of the rest of the U.S. An increase in the minimum wage is overdue. This is as good a time as any. As vaccinations proceed, we will be getting back to work & school. Our people need to be able to support their families on their earnings.

Thank you, Senator Tanigucghi, for this bill.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 7:12:33 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Joanne Swearingen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I **strongly support** SB SB676 on increasing the minimum wage in Hawaii to \$12. Hawaii's cost of living is higher than most of the other 49 states in our union and the current corona virus pandemic has made it even harder on Hawaii's families to sustain a living wage and minimum subsistence.

If it is possible, given our economy, I would like to encourage legislators to increase the minimum wage even higher, e.g., the \$15 proposed by Congress.

Thank you for your consideration.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 8:19:25 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
E. Shan Correa	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I believe that SB676 is an excellent first step in enabling all of Hawaii's citizens to be able to support themselves and their families without working second, or even third jobs, as I once had to do. I also feel that the proposed amendments to assure that the future minimum wage increases yearly to \$17.00 per hour are fair and badly needed. At this point, this wage for someone working a 40 hour week would still not be able to survive, let alone prosper, in Hawaii, but SB676 can lay a groundwork for a better future for all workers. This increase is long overdue and must passed at this legislative session!

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 6:29:04 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
John NAYLOR	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

While minimum wage here in Hawaii should be atleast \$15 if not \$17 an hour, If this is the best we can get, then GET IT!

JN

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 8:40:20 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mary Babcock	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SUPPORT with amendments to increase the minimum wage to \$17 per hour and mandate annual cost of living adjustments

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 7:32:33 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Samantha Berberich	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill. It's too hard for people to try and survive making less then \$12/hr.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 8:22:39 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kristy Fujii	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SUPPORT with amendments to increase the minimum wage to \$17 per hour and mandate annual cost of living adjustments

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 8:28:15 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
tia pearson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am asking that the bill be amended to continue incremental increases until it reaches at least \$17 per hour in 2026. I am also suggesting that the committee amend the bill to include annual increases to keep up with the basic cost of living. Studies done show that making \$17/hr for a 40 hr week starting now is needed in order to survive in Hawaii without having to work 2-3 or more jobs.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 7:50:21 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Greg Puppione	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I wish this proposal were for a higher minimum wage, but it's at least a step in the right direction. This wage increase can't come soon enough. Please pass this bill.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 1:36:31 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Joan White	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Taniguchi and Committee Members,

I urge you to pass this bill increasing the minimum wage to \$12.00per hour. While a substantial increase from the minimum wage today, even this will not allow a decent standard of living in our beloved Hawaii nei. Food, rent, utilities, taxes take most of what low wage earners bring home and thus they are doomed to a meager level of existence, though they may work as hard or harder than much higher wage earners. Please, please increase the minimum wage to \$12.00 per hour.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 8:11:59 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ruta Jordans	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please amend the bill to continue incremental increases until it reaches \$17 per hour in 2026 and include annual increases to keep up with the basic cost of living. With the high cost of living in Hawaii it is imperative for our legislature to treat our working people with respect and to be sure the minimum wage provides them with a LIVING wage!

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 8:46:13 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Joan Heartfield PhD	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Far too many of our friends and neighbors struggle daily, working multiple jobs just to get by. **According to recent studies, 40 hours a week at \$17 per hour is what it takes simply to survive in Hawaii.**

Please pass this bill to increase the minimal pay to \$12 hr. That's still too low, but it's a startimng point.

Thank you,

Joan Heartfield, PhD

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 9:15:52 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lauren Blickley	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in strong support of this bill, though request that the bill be amended to continue incremental increases until it reaches \$17 per hour in 2026. In addition, I suggest the committee amend the bill to include annual increases to keep up with the basic cost of living.

Far too many of our friends and neighbors struggle daily, working multiple jobs just to get by. **According to recent studies, 40 hours a week at \$17 per hour is what it takes simply to survive in Hawaii.**

Hawaii's minimum wage is stuck at \$10.10 per hour and we must take action now to ensure an increase.

Currently, 10 states and the District of Columbia have minimum wages higher than in Hawai'i. California, New York, Massachusetts, the District of Columbia, New Jersey, Illinois, and Maryland have all passed laws to increase their minimum wage to \$15 per hour, while their costs of living are all lower than in Hawai'i. (Hawaii Appleseed)

Pandemic or no pandemic, 27 other states are raising their minimum wage this year. Hawaii needs to be #28.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 9:29:26 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kelsey Amos	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill but please amend to \$17 by 2026.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 9:29:13 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dave Kisor	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

\$12 an hour for a 40 hour week is better than being struck in the head with a balpeen hammer, but not by much. Hawai'i should elevate to \$17. Other states and other political entities have gone to \$15 and their regions are thriving. The bill stated this is for certain employees. How does one know if they are a 'certain employee' or not and how is employment deigned 'certain'?

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 9:51:24 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Patrick Switzer	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support raising the minimum wage in Hawaii. \$12 / hour is a start, but is still not even close to a living wage. As a registered nurse working in Honolulu I can tell you this increase would be a lifeline to the working poor, who are faced with impossible decisions each day such as deciding between purchasing food for their kids and paying utility bills. For poor people with chronic illness like diabetes or high blood pressure, they often must decide which of their medications they will forgo, and take the chance their illness worsens and lands them in the hospital.

Studies show that the large corporations who are the biggest opponents of wage increases do just fine after the minimum wage for their workers is raised even to a living wage of \$15 / hour. When poor people make more money, they immediately spend it on useful things, so the money gets recycled right here in our local economy. Thank you for voting in support of this bill.

- Patrick Switzer

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 9:54:07 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melinda Wood	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support with reservations this bill that would raise the state minimum wage. It needs to be expanded by raising the minimum wage to \$17 by 2026. As written, the bill does not look far enough into the future to ensure that our lowest paid workers will be even marginally able to survive five years from now.

Thank you for your consideration.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 8:57:46 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Robert DeCoito	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

A minimum wage increase will only hurt the local economy and be short lived before all other products and services catch up. We all will soon be paying more and wanting increase in wage throughout all sectors of employment. In other words its just a vicious circle and only the ignorant can be convinced. I strongly oppose to an increase in the minimum wage.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 10:59:22 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Larry Alfrey	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SUPPORT with amendments to increase the minimum wage to \$17 per hour and mandate annual cost of living adjustment. I also support higher than \$12 at present time. You try to live off that money. I believe Hawaii needs to support its people. It costs a lot to live here. The majority of people are born here. Food isn't cheap. Rent isn't cheap. Cost of vehicle and maintenance isn't cheap. Gas isn't cheap. Insurance isn't cheap. Hourly rate should be increased to minimum of \$15/hr. People of Hawaii matter.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 7:42:41 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
jessica hernandez	Individual	Comments	No

Comments:

For far too long, society has looked down on minimum wage earners as inferior and disposable. But minimum wage workers have largely been considered essential throughout the pandemic. We know that--despite the exploitation of minimum wage workers--they are extremely valuable and important to our communities. It's loathsome that they--we--are unable to survive let alone thrive off of a full-time job that pays the current minimum wage. And this isn't our fault. It's not our fault that housing prices have sky-rocketed. It's not our fault that food and gas are at some of the highest prices in the country. And yet. Because corporations enjoy cheap labor, we are considered to be at fault for earning an unlivable wage.

As elected officials, you are responsible for ensuring our communities and societies prosper. We're not prospering. We're hanging on by a thread while a wealthy few live comfortably. I am 100% certain that you received services from a minimum wage earner over the last 9 months. They probably live in an overcrowded home if they have a stable home at all; maybe they can't afford healthier foods and are resorting to the fast food you consider a treat; they almost definitely are underinsured if insured at all. And they worked through a pandemic in high-risk situations whereas you were able to pick and choose when you wanted to be in-person with others in order to earn your pay check.

My point is that \$12 and \$13 is not sufficient. In order to earn a living wage, we need \$17 an hour. Let's go.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 7:02:56 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Steve Sakala	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Committee Members,

I strongly SUPPORT with amendments to increase the minimum wage to \$15 per hour and mandate annual cost of living adjustments.

Thank you for your service and commitment to Hawaii and its citizens.

Best,

Steve Sakala

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 10:14:05 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Stan Greenbaum	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support the comments made by Gary Hooser. The minimum wage is woefully inadequate for workers here in Hawai'i. This bill is not the solution, but it is a beginning. The minimum wage should be increased annually to reflect the cost of living. The legislature should be aiming for a \$17 per wage over the next 2 years followed by cost of living increases pegged at some small percentage less than inflation.

Anyone who works 40 hours per week should be able to support themselves. Studies have shown that where two adjacent jurisdictions have different minimum wages, people do not move to the higher paying jurisdiction for the higher wage and employers do not lay people off because they have to pay a higher minimum wage. One study was done by comparing McDonald's Restaurants in neighboring jurisdictions that had minimum wage differences of as much as \$2/hour.

Thank you

Stan Greenbaum

Kapa'a, HI 96746

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 7:19:04 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Tom Aitken	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Being poor is a trap. Please support SB676 and let's get the hard workers who keep our economy going a boost.

Mahalo!

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 5:22:20 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Andrea Morgan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

We must raise minimum wage to at least \$12.00/hr

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 6:39:07 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Chezlani Casar	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this effort to raise the minimum wage to \$12, but it needs to go further. People who work full time should be able to afford to live decently, and Hawaii's cost of living is very high. Please consider incremental raises that will raise the minimum wage to \$15 in the next few years. Mahalo.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 11:50:27 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Irene Newhouse	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Yes, HI needs a higher minimum wage! At \$10/hour, you earn \$400/week before taxes. That's only \$1600/month. You're lucky to find a place to rent on Maui that's that price, but you still need to eat, pay for transportation, clothes, health care/insurance. It just doesn't add up!!

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 4:51:59 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Walter C Dudley Jr	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support raising the minimum wage in Hawaii to at least \$12/hour (preferably \$15/hour). Not only will this help our working citizens most in need of financial assistance, but it will have a multiplier effect on the local economy as those workers spend their income immediately on essential needs. Ultimately there will be fewer residents in need of welfare, food stamps, etc.

It's a win-win.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 7:50:53 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Rexann Dubiel	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please, pass this out of committee.

We need this law. Too many individuals are struggling to survive in Hawaii and it's not humane.

Thank you.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 9:20:31 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill that increases the minimum wage - please consider amending this bill to make it a *living* wage of \$17/hour.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 6:25:08 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Shanna Dean	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha

It is incredibly important that we start working towards paying people a living wage for the work they do. The cost of living is climbing at a rapid rate, and the failure to help working people afford to live in Hawaii is self defeating. It is the working class that support the economy and do most of the work.

Affording a home or rent and food is essential. Raising the cost of goods and services because the employees are being paid a living wage will mostly create a good correction. Refocus money more on essential goods and services and stop the fivolous spending we all know and practice.

Please do the right thing

Shanna Dean, DVM

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 8:08:36 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Katherine Orr	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support SB676. We need to provide a higher minimum wage for working people in Hawaii. Furthermore, I urge the bill to be amended to support continued incremental increases in minimum wage until it reaches \$17 in 2026. I believe minimum wage must keep up with the basic cost of living, and I understand that \$17 per hour is what it takes to sustain one's basic living needs in Hawaii. I have resided in tourist areas in the past (Cape Cod, Florida Keys) and I have observed that enabling workers to make a sustainable living wage that keeps up with the cost of living in the area where they live and work is foundational to supporting a solid economy.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 8:14:55 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Shandhini Raidoo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Senate Labor Chair Taniguchi,

I am writing this testimony in support of SB676 to raise the minimum wage in Hawaii. However, I do not believe that this bil goes far enough: a minimum wage of \$12 is not sufficient to allow families in Hawaii to live comfortably and to thrive. I strongly suggest that this bill be amended to include future increases, with a goal of increasing to \$17 an hour by 2020. We need to do all we can to support families in Hawaii.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony,

Shandhini Raidoo

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 8:15:08 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mark A. Koppel	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF SB676

Aloha Senator Taniguchi and others:

Mahalo for beginning our minimum wage increase project. While \$12 is inadequate for Hawaii, it is an excellent start. All studies show higher minimum wages have a small effect on the business, but a huge effect on worker spending, and therefore help the economy tremendously.

Mark Koppel

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 1:15:36 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Wray Jose	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Sirs,

I write in support of SB676, a bill to raise Hawaii's minimum wage to \$12.00 by July 1, 2022. Hawaii's cost of living is very high, yet wages in our islands are very low. Many of Hawaii's citizens are unable to make ends meet despite working two or even three jobs. The burgeoning number of homeless men, women and children trying to survive on our streets is loud testimony to the failure of our economy to provide Hawaii's workers with a living wage. Even a \$12 minimum wage is inadequate to meet the needs of many of our families, especially in view of the astronomical price of housing here in paradise. But it is a step in the right direction.

Certainly there are concerns that raising the minimum wage could cost jobs. But it could also result in "priming the pump," thereby boosting Hawaii's overall economy and increasing tax revenues. As President Kennedy used to say, "A rising tide lifts all boats."

I therefore urge passage of Senate Bill 676, a bill designed to raise Hawaii's minimum wage.

Mahalo.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 8:45:43 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ted Bohlen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SUPPORT with amendments to increase the minimum wage to \$17 per hour and mandate annual cost of living adjustments

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 8:25:05 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Susan Boucher	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Yes! An increase in the minimum wage is desperately needed in Hawaii. Everyone I know works at least 2 jobs, just to scrape by.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 9:08:19 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ellen Godbey Carson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please make our minimum wage a living wage in Hawiai. This bill is a step in the right direction, to at least increase to \$12 per hour. We should aim higher, however, and I request an amendment to establish a minimum wage of \$15 per hour, within one or two years of the \$12 per hour increase.

Thank you for your consideration and for helping make Hawaii more livable for our residents

Ellen Godbey Carson

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 9:02:07 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Henri Etta Schmitz	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I believe this action is long overdue to ensure the quality of life needed for a healthy economy.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 8:17:38 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
donald erway	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

We need 15 dollars per hour. 12 is the minimim!

Mahalo,

Don

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 9:52:40 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Michal Fentin Stover	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support SB676. Further, I would like to see the bill amended to increase the minimum wage to \$17 per hour in the next few years and to mandate annual cost of living adjustments. Hawai'i workers deserve a living wage! Thank you.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 11:07:05 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Banner Fanene	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Talofa -

While I rarely support increasing Minimum Wage, I support SB676 because it is a necessary \$12 fix for the time being. Minimum wages should only be increased AFTER everything has been done to FIRST lower the Cost Of Living.

I do not Support any incremental increases to this Bill. Leave it at \$12 while lowering Hawaii's rediculous High Cost of Living.

Fa'afetai,

Lagolemu Banner Si'ufaga Fanene

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 10:06:38 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Francine Roby	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I write in strong support of SB676, and ask that the bill be amended to continue incremental increases until it reaches \$17 per hour (According to recent studies, 40 hours a week at \$17 per hour is what it takes simply to survive in Hawaii) in 2026. It would also make sense for the committee to amend the bill to include annual increases to keep up with the basic cost of living here.

Many of our friends and neighbors work multiple jobs just to get by, and with the distances one has to travel on the Big Island where I live, this means people are barely breaking even, never getting ahead. With COVID-19, if they still have jobs, their hours are cut and they are falling farther in debt.. Other states are finding it possible to pass minimum wage increases, since the Federal minimum has fallen so far behind reality. It's just a minimum to keep people who work for a living from still being at poverty levels. Hawaii will recover and rebound and it must be at all levels, of working people and their ohana, and businesses and industry. Increasing the minimum wage helps that happen.

As I understand it, 10 states and the District of Columbia now have minimum wages higher than Hawai'i, while their costs of living are all lower than ours. We have to get moving in the right direction, setting a MINIMUM wage that is a LIVING wage. I once worked for the US Dept.of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, and enforced the federal minimum wage laws, and I deeply recognize how important it is to have that baseline minimum, federal and state levels, as well as sufficient enforcement mechanisms, because unfortunately some businesses still try to avoid paying the minimum wage. It is simply good business practice, as well as aloha, and legal compliance, to pay a living wage to our workers.

It is your and our kuleana to support Hawaii's working people and their families by passing this bill. Please do so with amendments for incremental increases up to \$17/hour and annual cost of living adjustments.

Mahalo.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 9:52:30 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Tom Tatum	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SUPPORT with amendments to increase the minimum wage to \$17 per hour and mandate annual cost of living adjustments

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 10:14:00 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Anita Cook	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support [SB676](#) increasing the minimum wage in Hawaii to \$12 per hour

anita cook

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 9:26:04 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Doris McGowan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha! I am writing today because it is very important to all people of Hawaii that they are looked upon as important citizens of the State. If we are not paying the proper wage for work rendered, it leaves a feeling of worthlessness and the thought "why am I working anyway/" Come on! Let's raise the minimum wage to the \$12. thank you, iris (doris) mcgowan

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 10:50:58 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Tony Radmilovich	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

It is absolutely high time to increase Hawaii's minimum wage. Please pass this measure urgently.!

Respectfully, Tony Radmilovich

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 10:28:13 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Erika Kim	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Erika Kim. I am from Kaimuki on Oahu. I am writing to support SB676, which raises the Hawai'i minimum wage from \$10.10/hour to \$12/hour starting in 2022.

In order to simply survive in Hawai'i, one needs to be making at least \$17 per hour during a 40-hour workweek. Therefore, even after raising the minimum wage to \$12 per hour, one would be required to work a second job and work over 40 hours per week in order to simply survive in our state. This is unacceptable, and this bill should be amended to continue incremental increases until it reaches \$17 per hour in 2026. Furthermore, I feel that the committee should amend the bill to include annual increases to keep up with the basic cost of living.

Although this bill is insufficient for people that work minimum wage-paying jobs, it is a step in the right direction. Thank you for your time.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 11:04:13 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kathryn Braun	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I urge you to support this bill to raise the minimum wage in Hawai'i. I also urge you to amend the bill to increase to \$17/hour by 2024.

This raise is the minimal needed for a "living wage" by an individual trying to live in Hawai'i, which is very expensive. This raise is ESPECIALLY important because access to affordable housing is so limited here, and food and gas are expensive too.

As a professor of public health and social work, my research shows that health is directly associated with wealth, and people living without earning at least a "living wage" are much, much more likely to be food insecure and homeless. They also are much more likely to develop chronic diseases, like diabetes, that are very costly to the state (as well as to the individual). Healthy people are more productive and better consumers.

In the long run, guaranteeing a "living wage" as the minimum wage will improve the health of our people and our economy.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 11:23:53 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Regina Gregory	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Suggest you add further steps to increase the minimum wage to \$15/hour.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 10:36:11 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Donna Sue Shepherd	Individual	Comments	No

Comments:

I have lived and worked in retail sales and food service on the Big Island for 30 years. All of you folks should vote to raise the minimum wage and you know all the reasons why. I was laid off in 2020 and am grateful to have been able to collect unemployment for 6 months. The minimum wage should be \$17 an hour but because of private interests you have whittled it down to \$12 ...MAYBE!!! Every employer I have worked for has made fine profits. Employers just need to consciously assist thier employees to have a efficient system of business and redirect expencitures. Employees are happiest with win/win. Represent us now. Help us now. Are you really progressive? Cost of living goes up and do you really care!!! I'll keep watching. Mahalo for your consideration of the Greater Good

Donna Sue Shepherd

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 8:11:09 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jennifer Martin	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Hi, Please raise the minimum wage to at least \$12/hr (\$17 would be better). Hawaii is a very expensive place to live, and no one can survive on such low pay. Thanks!

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 11:27:50 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Puanani Rogers	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Puanani Rogers, I live in the ahupua`a o Kealia on the island of Kauai.

I am testifying in strong support of SB676, and ask that you please pass this measure.

Much gratitude,

Puanani

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 11:14:06 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Bob Hansen	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Please do not place an artificial bottom on wages. Wouldnt it be better to have 2 people working at \$10 rather than one person working at \$12. Time and time again it is proven that the free economy works best and the lower the taxes the better the economy. Let's go with the science please.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 10:43:41 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
James E Raymond	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please support fairness.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 11:47:17 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kaleopono Norris	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

[SB676](#) According to recent studies, 40 hours a week at \$17 per hour is what it takes simply to survive in Hawaii. SUPPORT with amendments to increase the minimum wage to \$17 per hour and mandate annual cost of living adjustments.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 10:58:52 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Rossini Botev, MD	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am writing this testimony to support the increase of the minimum wage in the state of Hawaii to \$17 per hour and mandate futile annual cost of living adjustments.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 12:44:00 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
David B. Meyer	Individual	Comments	No

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is David Meyer and I am 65 years old. I live on Hawaii Island.

In 2013 I started working at Home depot in Hilo. It was a parttime job so I could get health insurance while we established a Coffee Farm in Papaaloa, HI. The job paid \$10.00/hr., less than i made 36 years ago in Oregon as a laborer at a sawmill. Think about that, 36 years later and wages have gone down. Can you think of the price of anything that has gone down over the last 36 years?

Some of my fellow workers at Home Depot worked 2 or 3 jobs just to get by, NOT to get ahead. I knew some that slept in the parking lot at night because they couldn't afford gas to go home and come back the next morning.

It's way past time to face up to the reality that 10's of thousands of workers in our state are reliant on government subsidies, family assistance, and multiple jobs to just make it from paycheck to paycheck.

So here we are talking about \$12.00 an hour, according to recent studies 40 hours a week at \$17 per hour is what it takes simply to survive in Hawaii.

We must stop ignoring the plight of the working class in our great state and provide a living wage for all that are able and willing to work. The Hawaii Legislature must live up to it's supposedly strong and progressive Democratic traditions. Are we Democrats only in name. Its time to act like the Democrats we know we can be.

I would suggest that the bill be amended to continue incremental increases until it reaches \$17 per hour in 2026. I am also suggesting that the committee amend the bill to include annual increases to keep up with the basic cost of living after that.

Please address the biggest issue your constituents face, the RIGHT TO A LIVING WAGE, TODAY!

Mahalo, David B. Meyer

Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair
Senator Les Ihara Jr., Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Labor, Culture, and the Arts

Monday, February 8th, 2021
Hawaii State Capitol via Video Conference

In support of S.B. 676, Relating to the minimum wage with amendments.

Dear Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Ihara, and esteemed members of the committee,

My name is Emma Ishihara, and I am a lifelong resident of Hawai'i and a student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

I am very happy and excited to see this bill progress in our state. It is widely known that the cost of living has been increasing at a rate much higher than the minimum wage has been. I strongly support this bill and its intentions to increase the minimum wage.

Today, I would like to submit my strong support for S.B. 676, Relating to the Minimum Wage but with amendments.

People in our state are struggling to survive and can hardly find jobs that pay enough to support their family home costs. Housing is the largest expense by far for any individual or family in our state and the current minimum wage is not enough to keep our keiki off the streets. It is clear that employers will only pay people the minimum they are required to and thus it is vitally important to pass a bill enforcing higher wages for workers.

However, there is one amendment that I would propose to improve this bill to a decent standard. \$12 per hour is not nearly enough and many people, as seen in the protests among workers from Hawaiian Airlines who begged their employers for higher wages from 2017 to the present and to no avail. Workers unions and individuals who are struggling to get by on the current minimum wage need the support of our community and of you, our esteemed congress members.

Rather than enforcing a minimum wage based on the cost of food and assuming that it would be enough to support our community, this congress should enforce a living wage of \$17 per hour to support our highly gentrified community.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill,

Emma M N Ishihara.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 12:24:04 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Meizhu Lui	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

How can you support a family in Hawaii on \$1600 a month, often without benefits? If we are sincere about growing our economy and helping ordinary people afford to stay in Hawaii, we must raise the minimum wage. Throughout history, when the minimum wage has been raised, or when unions have demanded higher wages, doom has been predicted. It has not happened. And when people cannot afford to take care of themselves even while working full time, our society pays the price, one way or another. This small raise is a down payment in helping essential (and non-essential workers) earn what they're worth, and to help them gain their independence and dignity.

Thank you.

Meizhu Lui, Papaalooa, Hawaii Island

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 12:19:51 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sam Fisk	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Citizens working full time should not be living in poverty. An increase in the minimum wage while expensive to businesses will lift the entire economy and come around to support business as well through increased consumer consumption. The option to do nothing will lead to greater tax liabilities for the state due to the impacts of poverty on Hawaii's families. There is no cheap solution there is only the economic impetus to act now. Pass SB676!

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 6:34:24 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Greg Crawford	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SUPPORT with amendments to increase the minimum wage to \$17 per hour and mandate annual cost of living adjustments.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 6:34:49 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Millicent Cox	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Hawaii State Senators,

The general analysis nationally supports increasing the minimum wage to offset the problems from the pandemic. Further, research has shown that increasing the minimum wage is good for the communities, and should not be feared as many try to portray it as a job killer.

Please vote to increase the Hawaii minimum wage.

Mahalo,

Millicent Cox

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 12:44:48 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dan Gardner	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

This would be a small but very important step to correct our seriously low minimum wage here in Hawaii. A reasonable ramp up to \$15 dollars an hour should also be included with cost of living increases mandatory.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 3:22:58 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Michael Christopher	Testifying for Pono Praxis	Support	No

Comments:

As a small business owner I ask you to please pass this bill. \$12 per hour is not enough but it will help. The minimum wage in my company is \$20 per hour.

Sincerely,

Michael Christopher Psy.D., Ph.d.

President/CEO of Pono Praxis

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 4:40:26 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Duane Sosa	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha!!!

I believe raising the minimum wage RIGHT NOW would be detrimental to already overly financially stressed small business owners.

Mahalo

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 1:19:15 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dyson Chee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Taniguchi, Vice-chair Ihara, and members of the LCA Committee,

My name is Dyson Chee and I am a resident of Ala Moana. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB676 and asking that the bill be amended to continue incremental increases until it reaches \$17 per hour in 2026. According to recent studies, 40 hours a week at \$17 per hour is what it takes simply to survive in Hawaii. A special thanks to Chair Taniguchi for introducing this bill and helping to ensure that our friends and neighbors do not have to struggle daily, working multiple jobs just to get by.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Dyson Chee

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 6:36:35 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Megan Deets	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this Bill. A minimum wage increase is desperately needed.



49 South Hotel Street, Room 314 | Honolulu, HI 96813
www.lwv-hawaii.com | 808.531.7448 | voters@lwv-hawaii.com

COMMITTEE ON LABOR, CULTURE AND THE ARTS)
MONDAY, 2/8/21, 3 PM, Room No. 225

SB676 RELATING TO THE MINIMUM WAGE
Beppie Shapiro, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Taniguchi, Vice-Chair Ihara, and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii supports this bill, which increases the minimum wage to \$12 beginning 7/1/22. The League also requests an amendment to bring the minimum wage closer to a “living” wage.

The League of Women Voters has long supported economic, fiscal and social policies which meet basic human needs, and acknowledges that one way of meeting many of those needs is through a “livable” minimum wage. A “living” wage allows the employed individual and dependents to purchase basic nutritionally adequate food; access transportation between home, work, and school – by public transportation where that is available; rent housing which meets certain minimal standards; and pay for health care when needed.

In 2018 DBEDT established the level of minimum wage which supports these basic human needs at \$17/hour, for a single wage earner without dependents. Inflation has increased that to \$17.63 per hour in 2020. And SB676 envisions raising the minimum wage to \$12 in 2022!

Other organizations peg the living wage at higher levels: Aloha United Way’s study ALICE (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed) at \$19.32/hour if 2 wage earners support a household of 4, for example.

Many other states with lower costs of living have raised their minimum wage to \$15/hour. To do less in Hawaii is heartless, and sentences the tens of thousands of people in Hawaii, many of them with dependents, who currently earn less than \$15/hour, to a life of multiple jobs, reliance on government support, inadequate shared housing, and postponed health care.

The League supports ANY increase in the state minimum wage but believes that SB676 should be amended to increase the minimum wage to at least \$17 by 2025, when it will already not sustain a single individual at a basic subsistence level!

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 1:17:43 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Michael deYcaza	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please pass this bill and amend it to 17\$/hr so people can afford to pay their skyhigh rents.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 1:06:03 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Becky Gardner	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

President Biden has made a \$15/hour minium wage a key piece of his 2020 platform. This is significant - when the cost-of-living is MUCH higher in Hawaii than on the mainland.

The Economic Policy Institute and the University of California, Berkeley found that raising the federal minimum wage to \$15 by 2025 would **reduce** government spending on public assistance programs and increase tax revenue. I can't think of reasons why the same wouldn't be true in Hawaii.

\$avings! Exactly when we need them.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 12:33:13 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jeff Mcknight	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

\$12.00 is a substandard wage and comes nowhere close to covering the basic cost of living in the State of Hawaii. Please consider an amennment scaling the wage up to \$17 over the next 5 years. Mahalo for your consideration.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 12:09:23 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Michael Monroe	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SUPPORT with amendments to increase the minimum wage to \$17 per hour and mandate annual cost of living adjustments.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 6:38:11 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Carolyn Eaton	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Carolyn Eaton and I strongly support this increase in the State's minimum wage.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 12:12:40 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jane E Arnold	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please support SB676 with amendments to increase the minimum wage to \$17 per hour and mandate annual cost of living adjustments. As long as minimum wage increases are phased in gradually, there should not be any negative impacts to business.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 11:41:52 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Robert Grinpas	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Legislators,

I ask for your support of SB676. People who want to work should be able to at least feed themselves after working all day. That's about all the bill insures but that is better than what we have.

Thank You for your consideration

Robert Grinpas, Kapaa, Kauai

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 7:28:23 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Margo Peter	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

The greatest danger to our citizens safety and well-being is the gap between high and low earnings. I heartily support this bill!

With respect,

Margo Peter, Psy.D.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 8:24:42 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
janice palma-glennie	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

aloha,

This bill is a small step, but a necessary one, to helping people in Hawai'i survive and live in dignity for the work they do.

mahalo for supporting this bill.

sincerely,

janice palma-glennie

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 6:39:43 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Marisa Plemer	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support the increase of minimum wage to \$12 an hour as very right and proper at this time. Thank you.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 6:37:31 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ronald Tanaka	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I write in favor of SB676, with amendments to further the amount during this period up to and including \$17.00 per hour. A minimum of \$15.00 per hour should be instituted as soon as possible with the amount of \$17.00 per hour minimum for the life of this piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Ron Tanaka

February 6, 2021

To: Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Ihara, Jr, and Committee members

From: The Hawai'i Democratic Party Women's Caucus'

Subject: Testimony in SUPPORT of SB676

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of SB676 to raise the minimum wage.

Because Hawai'i has the highest cost of living in the United States, I hope the Legislature will find a way increase the minimum wage above \$12 per hour proposed in this bill.

CNBC ranked Hawai'i as the most expensive state to living in 2019: "Hawaiians use the word aloha to say both hello and good-bye. So if you live in Hawaii, you can say aloha to high prices and aloha to your money. Hawaiians pride themselves on their homegrown coffee. They also pay dearly for it — at \$8.20 a pound, it is by far the most expensive in the country. A dozen eggs in Honolulu will cost you \$4.00, or twice the cost in Surprise, Arizona....2019 Cost of Living score: 1 out of 50 points (Top States Grade F)" America's 10 most expensive states to live in 2019, CNBC

"The state with the highest cost of living index is Hawaii, whose index is 196.3. This means that the cost of living in Hawaii is 96.3% higher than the U.S. average. Hawaii's housing index is 336.3, where a two-bedroom costs about \$1,895 per month, and the median home value is about \$660,000. Groceries are also significantly more expensive in Hawaii since it is an island and most goods need to be shipped in. Hawaii's livable wage is \$61,000." Cost of Living Index 2021, World Population Review

"Hawaii is the most expensive place to live in the U.S. The state's cost of living is nearly double the national average. One of the biggest factors in an area's cost of living is housing costs. Hawaii has the highest average housing costs by far. The average Hawaii property goes for more than three times more than the national average. It's not only housing that costs more in the state. The Aloha State also has much higher utilities and grocery costs." States with Lowest Cost of Living, Insure.com, Updated January 6, 2021

Of the most expensive states, the minimum wage in the District of Columbia is \$15/hr., in California it is \$13 and going to \$14 in 2021 for employers with over 26 employees, in Washington state it is \$13.50 going to \$13.69 in 2021. Despite being the most expensive state in the United States, 20 other states have higher minimum wages than Hawai'i.

Even our own official data show we need a substantial increase in the minimum wage. Hawai'i's Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism December 2019 report says, an individual needed to earn \$35,143 to be self sufficient, a couple needed \$44,998, and a couple with a pre-school child needed \$59,428. To earn that amount, a single person would need to earn a about \$17 an hour to be self-sufficient.

Me ke aloha pumehana,

Amy Monk,

For Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 7:34:42 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
James Tolley	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

This is the least we can do to support our fellow citizens who are struggling to live in dignity. Thank you for supporting this!

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 6:46:42 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Glen Kila	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha e Chair and committee members:

I support SB676 in raising the minimum wage. The increase is needed because of the high cost of living in Hawaii.

Mahalo,

Glen Kila

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 6:40:18 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Larry	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

People need help!



SENATE BILL 676, RELATING TO THE MINIMUM WAGE

FEBRUARY 8, 2021 · SENATE LABOR, CULTURE
AND THE ATS COMMITTEE · CHAIR SEN. BRIAN T.
TANIGUCHI

POSITION: Comments

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus provides the following **comments and suggested amendments** for SB 676, relating to the minimum wage, which increases the minimum wage for certain employees to \$12.00 per hour beginning 7/1/2022.

A living wage is a human right. According to the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, a single adult required an income of \$35,143 to achieve self-sufficiency in Hawai'i in 2018, while a single parent with one child required \$59,428. Adjusted for inflation, DBEDT's reporting shows that in 2020, a single minimum wage worker must earn at least \$17.63 to survive on our shores, a number that rises to \$18.22 for Honolulu. At our current statewide minimum wage rate of \$10.10 per hour, however, a full-time minimum-wage employee earns only \$21,008 annually, \$15,000 less than what's needed to meet her basic needs. If our cost of living returns to standard pre-COVID inflation of roughly 3 percent per year, then the minimum wage needed for a single individual to survive in Hawai'i in 2024 could be \$19.85/hour or \$41,288/year.

Moreover, Hawai'i residents face the highest housing costs in the nation, at more than twice the national average. Researchers who authored the National Low Income Housing Coalition's *Out of Reach 2020* report found that a full-time worker would need to earn \$38.76/hour to afford a

two-bedroom apartment at fair market value in our state, with Honolulu experiencing a 67 percent increase in fair market rent between 2005 and 2015. Average rent for a two-bedroom unit surpassed \$2,000 in recent years, with minimum wage workers needing to log 117 hours per week to afford a modest one-bedroom apartment at fair market value and 153 hours per week to afford a two-bedroom—a number that is equivalent to working over 20 hours a day with no days off year-round. In the past five years alone, Honolulu rent has increased by more than 25 percent. While 42 percent of Hawai'i residents are renters (a number that does not include individuals and families renting outside of the regulated rental market), they earn an average wage of \$17.17/hour, according to NLIHC, scarcely enough to meet their basic needs.

One out of every four households in Hawai'i report that they are “doubling up” or are three paychecks or less away from being homeless, per the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice. Additionally, over 60 percent of households are severely cost-burdened, following NLIHC data, meaning that they pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing, a number that rises to over 80 percent of extremely low-income households, with only 74 homes available for every 100 households earning 80 percent of their respective area's median income.

Notably, housing costs increased during the pandemic. In Honolulu, median single-family home prices reached a record of \$880,000 last October, driven largely by sales to residential property investors. Unsurprisingly, our state is now experiencing population decline. Hawai'i saw domestic out-migration increase for a third consecutive year in 2019, as the state's high cost of living continued to push people to the mainland. Census estimates show that our state's population dropped by 8,866 people from July 2019 to July 2020, when births, deaths, and migration were accounted for. That population drop is nearly double the loss seen in 201, when Hawai'i one of just ten states in the country to lose population, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. People are simply being priced out of paradise.

Additionally, prior to the pandemic, as the minimum wage increased to \$10.10/hour over the last four years, our local economy grew. People earning more income, especially at the lower end of the pay scale, spend money on basic goods and services (they can't afford to invest in the stock market or buy imported luxury goods), thereby putting their increased earnings back into the local economy, increasing demand, raising local profits, and uplifting the Aloha State's overall

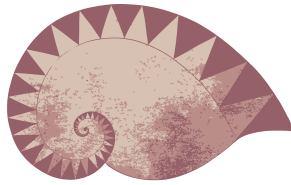
economy. Over the four years preceding COVID-19, we experienced record low unemployment and witnessed the number of small businesses boom. Hawai'i will likely see the same impact under new minimum wage increases as our economy returns to normal, leading to greater prosperity for all. **We cannot allow COVID-19 to become an excuse for failing to create a living wage, since the virus wrought economic devastation that disproportionately harmed low-income families, who lost their jobs, saw their hours slashed, and are now struggling to pay for basic needs, like food and rent.** If anything, the pandemic and ensuing economic crisis have made raising the minimum wage more urgent, so that we can ensure economic security for workers who are struggling to find a path back to financial security, while our nation's billionaires have glaringly increased their wealth by over a trillion dollars since COVID-19 was declared to be a global public health emergency.

That said, we suggest **amending this measure to phase in a minimum wage increase to \$17 by 2026.** Hawai'i's current minimum wage, adjusted for inflation, amounts to merely \$8.52, which is far below what's needed to survive, much less thrive, on our shores. **In fact, the eight states (including Washington D.C.) with the highest cost of living other than Hawai'i—New York, California, New Jersey, Maryland, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Washington, and the District of Columbia—have all passed laws to raise their minimum wages to at least \$15 over the next five years.** We should follow suit by providing economic justice to the hardworking families that form the heartbeat of our economy and whose financial situation becomes more precarious with each passing year. **We also urge the committee to eliminate the tip credit and tie future minimum wage increases to the cost-of-living index,** so that the financial security of working families is no longer weaponized for political profiteering or electoral gain.

Over two-thirds of Hawai'i's economy is predicated upon consumer spending. As we work to overcome the fiscal emergency that besieged us last year, we should put more money in the hands of our state's workers, which will cause our entire economy to surge. A living wage is not just a financial boost for working families. It is a prescription for maintaining the prosperity of the islands' entire economy.

Kris Coffield · Chairperson, Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus ·

(808) 679-7454 · kriscoffield@gmail.com



Pono Hawai'i Initiative

Patrick Shea - Treasurer • Lena Mochimaru - Secretary
Nelson Ho • Summer Starr

Monday, February 8, 2021

Relating to Minimum Wage
Testifying in Support with Amendments

Aloha Chair and members of the committee,

The Pono Hawai'i Initiative (PHI) **supports with amendments SB676 Relating to Minimum Wage**, which increases, for certain employees, the state minimum wage to \$12.00 an hour beginning in 2022. PHI is requesting that the Committee improve the measure **to continue incremental increases until it reaches \$17 per hour in 2026, and that the bill include annual increases to keep up with the basic cost of living.**

Far too many of our friends and neighbors struggle daily, working multiple jobs just to get by. **According to recent studies, 40 hours a week at \$17 per hour is what it takes simply to survive in Hawaii.**

Currently, 10 states and the District of Columbia have minimum wages higher than in Hawai'i. California, New York, Massachusetts, the District of Columbia, New Jersey, Illinois, and Maryland have all passed laws to increase their minimum wage to \$15 per hour, while their costs of living are all lower than in Hawai'i. (Hawaii Appleseed)

Pandemic or no pandemic, 27 other states are raising their minimum wage this year. Hawai'i needs to be #28. Let us not cut our support short for the people of Hawai'i.

For all these reasons, we urge you to vote in favor of this measure with the amendments stated above.

Mahalo for the opportunity,

Gary Hooser
Executive Director
Pono Hawai'i Initiative

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 8:56:22 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
David Bruce Leonard	Testifying for Earth Medicine Institute	Support	No

Comments:

This is madness. Anyone willing to work 40 hours a week deserves to make enough money to at least support themselves, if not their family.



SB 676, RELATING TO THE MINIMUM WAGE

FEBRUARY 8, 2021 · SENATE LABOR, CULTURE
AND THE ARTS COMMITTEE · CHAIR SEN. BRIAN T.
TANIGUCHI

POSITION: Comments.

RATIONALE: Imua Alliance provides the following comments and suggested amendments for SB 676, relating to the minimum wage, which increases the minimum wage for certain employees to \$12.00 per hour beginning 7/1/2022.

A living wage is a human right. According to the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, a single adult required an income of \$35,143 to achieve self-sufficiency in Hawai'i in 2018, while a single parent with one child required \$59,428. Adjusted for inflation, DBEDT's reporting shows that in 2020, a single minimum wage worker must earn at least \$17.63 to survive on our shores, a number that rises to \$18.22 for Honolulu. At our current statewide minimum wage rate of \$10.10 per hour, however, a full-time minimum-wage employee earns only \$21,008 annually, \$15,000 less than what's needed to meet her basic needs. If our cost of living returns to standard pre-COVID inflation of roughly 3 percent per year, then the minimum wage needed for a single individual to survive in Hawai'i in 2024 could be \$19.85/hour or \$41,288/year.

Moreover, Hawai'i residents face the highest housing costs in the nation, at more than twice the national average. Researchers who authored the National Low Income Housing Coalition's *Out of Reach 2020* report found that a full-time worker would need to earn \$38.76/hour to afford a two-bedroom apartment at fair market value in our state, with Honolulu experiencing a 67 percent

increase in fair market rent between 2005 and 2015. Average rent for a two-bedroom unit surpassed \$2,000 in recent years, with minimum wage workers needing to log 117 hours per week to afford a modest one-bedroom apartment at fair market value and 153 hours per week to afford a two-bedroom—a number that is equivalent to working over 20 hours a day with no days off year-round. In the past five years alone, Honolulu rent has increased by more than 25 percent. While 42 percent of Hawai'i residents are renters (a number that does not include individuals and families renting outside of the regulated rental market), they earn an average wage of \$17.17/hour, according to NLIHC, scarcely enough to meet their basic needs.

One out of every four households in Hawai'i report that they are “doubling up” or are three paychecks or less away from being homeless, per the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice. Additionally, over 60 percent of households are severely cost-burdened, following NLIHC data, meaning that they pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing, a number that rises to over 80 percent of extremely low-income households, with only 74 homes available for every 100 households earning 80 percent of their respective area's median income.

Notably, housing costs increased during the pandemic. In Honolulu, median single-family home prices reached a record of \$880,000 last October, driven largely by sales to residential property investors. Unsurprisingly, our state is now experiencing population decline. Hawai'i saw domestic out-migration increase for a third consecutive year in 2019, as the state's high cost of living continued to push people to the mainland. Census estimates show that our state's population dropped by 8,866 people from July 2019 to July 2020, when births, deaths, and migration were accounted for. That population drop is nearly double the loss seen in 201, when Hawai'i one of just ten states in the country to lose population, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. People are simply being priced out of paradise.

Additionally, prior to the pandemic, as the minimum wage increased to \$10.10/hour over the last four years, our local economy grew. People earning more income, especially at the lower end of the pay scale, spend money on basic goods and services (they can't afford to invest in the stock market or buy imported luxury goods), thereby putting their increased earnings back into the local economy, increasing demand, raising local profits, and uplifting the Aloha State's overall economy. Over the four years preceding COVID-19, we experienced record low unemployment

and witnessed the number of small businesses boom. Hawai'i will likely see the same impact under new minimum wage increases as our economy returns to normal, leading to greater prosperity for all. **We cannot allow COVID-19 to become an excuse for failing to create a living wage, since the virus wrought economic devastation that disproportionately harmed low-income families, who lost their jobs, saw their hours slashed, and are now struggling to pay for basic needs, like food and rent.** If anything, the pandemic and ensuing economic crisis have made raising the minimum wage more urgent, so that we can ensure economic security for workers who are struggling to find a path back to financial security, while our nation's billionaires have glaringly increased their wealth by over a trillion dollars since COVID-19 was declared to be a global public health emergency.

That said, we suggest **amending this measure to phase in a minimum wage increase to \$17 by 2026.** Hawai'i's current minimum wage, adjusted for inflation, amounts to merely \$8.52, which is far below what's needed to survive, much less thrive, on our shores. **In fact, the eight states (including Washington D.C.) with the highest cost of living other than Hawai'i—New York, California, New Jersey, Maryland, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Washington, and the District of Columbia—have all passed laws to raise their minimum wages to at least \$15 over the next five years.** We should follow suit by providing economic justice to the hardworking families that form the heartbeat of our economy and whose financial situation becomes more precarious with each passing year. **We also urge the committee to eliminate the tip credit and tie future minimum wage increases to the cost-of-living index,** so that the financial security of working families is no longer weaponized for political profiteering or electoral gain.

Over two-thirds of Hawai'i's economy is predicated upon consumer spending. As we work to overcome the fiscal emergency that besieged us last year, we should put more money in the hands of our state's workers, which will cause our entire economy to surge. A living wage is not just a financial boost for working families. It is a prescription for maintaining the prosperity of the islands' entire economy.

Kris Coffield · Executive Director, Imua Alliance · (808) 679-7454 · kris@imuaalliance.org



The Thirty-First Legislature
Regular Session of 2021

THE SENATE

Committee on Labor, Culture, and the Arts

Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair

Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

Committee on Human Services

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

State Capitol, Conference Room 225

Monday, February 8, 2021; 3:00 p.m.

**STATEMENT OF THE LWU LOCAL 142 ON S.B. 676
RELATING TO THE MINIMUM WAGE**

The ILWU Local 142 **supports** S.B. 676, but with **suggested amendments**. S.B. 676 will increase the minimum wage for certain employees to \$12.00 per hour beginning 7/1/2022.

We appreciate the Chair and the members of the Committee for scheduling this bill and recognizing the need to increase our minimum wage in the state of Hawaii. As everyone knows, our current minimum wage is a poverty wage in the state of Hawaii and workers desperately need a raise. Unfortunately, \$12 in 2022 is simply not enough. Our own Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism has concluded workers in Hawaii need to be earning over \$17 an hour to simply get by. In 2022, that number will only increase.

Even our Democrats in Congress including President Biden are seeking to increase the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour – a minimum wage everyone in America should be earning today. We are grateful to see the conversation of a \$15 an hour national minimum wage gaining traction and interest and are hopeful Hawaii can also move our minimum wage to a living wage. We suggest amending S.B. 676 to increase Hawaii's minimum wage to \$17 an hour by 2026. While that is still below what workers need to earn in Hawaii, it helps move us in the right direction and closer to a living wage.

We would also like to see the tip credit eliminated so all workers can earn the same wage. Women make up the majority of the workforce in the restaurant service industry and are the ones punished for this archaic and discriminatory practice. Far too often, women are sexually harassed or abused while earning tips on the job and many do not report the crime in fear of retaliation and the need for tips to survive. Simply put, this practice needs to end. Even with tips,

most servers barely earn enough to get by and are still one of the lowest paid professions. Hopefully, the tip credit will be eliminated.

Again, thank you for scheduling S.B. 676 - we hope you will consider the suggested amendments above.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 6:05:49 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
David Mulinix	Testifying for Our Revolution Hawaii	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Kakou,

On behalf of Our Revolution Hawaii's 7,000 supporters and members statewide, we are in strong support of raising Hawaii's minimum wage.

We ask that the bill be amended to continue incremental increases until it reaches \$17 per hour in 2026, amended the to include annual increases to keep up with the basic cost of living.

Far too many of our friends and neighbors struggle daily, working multiple jobs just to get by. According to recent studies, 40 hours a week at \$17 per hour is what it takes simply to survive in Hawaii. In fact because Hawaii has one of the lowest minimum wages in the country, half the low wage workers are just one to two paychecks away from homelessness.

Hawaii's minimum wage is stuck at \$10.10 per hour and we must take action now to ensure an increase.

Currently, 10 states and the District of Columbia have minimum wages higher than in Hawaii. California, New York, Massachusetts, the District of Columbia, New Jersey, Illinois, and Maryland have all passed laws to increase their minimum wage to \$15 per hour, while their costs of living are all lower than in Hawaii.

Every time the minimum wage has been raised, it had no ill effect on small businesses. In fact because of the increase in the minimum wage, customers had more money to spend in small businesses, which more than offset the cost of a slightly higher minimum wage.

Mahalo for your kind attention,

Dave Mulinix, Statewide Community Organizer

Our Revolution Hawaii

Kaneohe, Hawaii

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 9:49:23 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
James E. Coon	Testifying for Trilogy Excursions	Support	No

Comments:

We would like to see some language that made it possible to hire teenagers starting at age 16 in internship positions that would pay less than the minimum wage. This gives them valuable training in the work place, helps them in their career choices. Often these young people are hired as summer help which helps them pay for higher education. This work/internship opportunity will be greatly reduced with the increase in minimum wage unless there are exemptions or tax breaks.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 10:53:50 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sharon Goodwin	Testifying for Kauai Community Coalition	Support	No

Comments:

Mahalo Senator Taniguchi for proposing \$12/hr minimum wage. I fully support but let us not stop there. \$12/hr OK for the time being. We citizens know who has born the brunt of this pandemic's brutal economic downturn--the working class + our native cultures, Hawaiians, Micronesian, Marshallese, Pacific Islanders, Filipinos, and the homeless. As Pres Biden stated, "When we raise the minimum wage, everyone benefits!" EVERYONE!

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 11:18:14 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Thomas Jones	Testifying for Gyotaku Japanese Restaurants	Oppose	No

Comments:

In Opposition to SB676

Thomas Jones

President

Gyotaku Japanese Restaurants

Testimony Attached

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 6:58:22 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Support WITH Amendments

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 7:35:39 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ramona Hussey	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Senator Taniguchi,

I urge you to pass a bill requiring a liveable Minimum Wage. I think this bill should be amended to increase the living wage to \$17 per hour, as minimum wage workers have not had reasonable increases in years. This is urgent for families who exist on minimum wage. Businesses have profited off Hawaii's Far-Too-Low minimum wages for decades. It's past time to increase it to a living wage.

Thank you,

Ramona Hussey

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 7:45:20 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nedi McKnight	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SHAME ON YOU! \$12 IS NOT ENOUGH. RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE TO \$17

Hawai'i is one of the most expensive places to live. Our workers deserve a living wage.

If Hawai'i legislators can not come up with visionary policies regarding immediate implementation of a living wage- their own salaries should be pegged proportionately to the minimum wage. Not capable of passing a living wage- not deserving of your generous salary.

If a business can not afford to pay a living wage to employees, the owner and/or corporation can not afford to be in business. Period. Enough of this artificial economy where workers are exploited and tax paying residents subsidize businesses by paying for EBT, current state subsidized healthcare plans and public housing for low wage earners.

I ask everyone to join me in demanding the businesses display a placard with the lowest hourly pay of their employee(s). If I do not see \$17.00 on the placard, I will not be a customer or consumer. If the government won't do the right thing, the citizens will be forced to boycott businesses that do not pay a living wage.

As a working professional, I am making less now than I did in my 30's. Why? It isn't the economy- it is minimum wage dragging my salary down. When minimum wage is \$10-\$12 an hour, folks like me are considered 'lucky' to make \$20. So not only is \$12 not enough, it continues to impoverish minimum wage workers and all other working class people.

Some answers in advance for your excuses:

1. Scale the pay. Youth under 18 years old can be paid \$12 an hour, but workers over 18 must be paid a living wage.
2. Apprentices and people in training can be paid \$14 an hour, but after 6 months and sufficient training must be raised to \$17 per hour minimum.

3. If a business owner says that raising the minimum wage will put them out of business- so be it. They weren't in any business except the business of exploitation of other human beings.

In closing: People with low incomes (That would be people making minimum or living wage) spend their money. That's right- they pay their bills. They buy food. They stimulate the economy. From the ground up. Trickle up economics work.

STOP TAKING YEARS TO INCREASE MINIMUM WAGE. Inflation doesn't wait. Rising food prices don't wait. Rents don't wait. And we, the people, will no longer wait.

I wish I could sign off "Respectfully Yours" but you have lost my respect. \$12 an hour is spit in our eyes- it is the most insulting and cruel breadcrumb you could throw to us. Nobody is going to thank you for this pittance. It is completely unacceptable.

RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE TO \$17.00 AN HOUR.

Nedi McKnight

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 9:51:05 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Barbara J. Service	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

\$12.00 an hour is hardly a living wage, but it's a start.

Please support SB676.

Mahalo!

Barbara J. Service MSW (ret.)

Senior Advocate

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 11:06:30 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Cara	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am struck every day by the economic struggle of our fellow citizens in Hawai`i county. In my time as an overnight manager of Longs Drug I was appalled at how many of my colleagues needed the additional help of food stamps to feed their families even if they had full time positions or even 2 or 3 jobs. I worked a full time job on this minimum wage 10.10 and couldn't make ends meet, even when living with a partner who was also full time. We cannot allow employers to continue paying our fellow citizens STARVATION WAGES. The economic pressure citizens face every day is criminal.

I demand that this bill be ammended and increased to 15 dollars an hour, a figure floated nationally. I am also demand in that the bill include annual increases to keep up with the basic cost of living.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/6/2021 11:43:52 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nikos Leverenz	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Chair Taniguchi, Vice-Chair Ihara, & Committee Members:

An increase in Hawaii's minimum wage is long overdue.

The proposed figure does not meet the level necessary to maintain a comfortable standard of living.

Low wages that are not able to meet the high -- and ever increasing -- costs of housing, food, energy, health care, and transportation are a major reason that many who were born and raised here leave for the continent.

Working families need more support given an economic climate that will be less than robust in the years to come. This pandemic provides a valuable opportunity for policymakers to recalibrate their priorities in favor of workers.

Experience in other states shows that even substantial raises done over several years does not have a negative macroeconomic impact.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Nikos Leverenz

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 7:17:55 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sarah Biggs	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Rent, internet wifi, and every other necessisty keeps increasing in cost and yet wages stay the same. This has been unsustainabe for long enough. Increasing the minimum wage a measly \$1.90 next year, while laughable, is the first step, or rather crawl, towards making things right. You've got a long way to go. Better get started.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 7:34:04 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Catherine Ishida	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill **with amendments to increase the minimum wage to \$17 per hour and mandate annual cost of living adjustments.**

Hawaii's people need to be able to live with time left to spare to take care of themselves, thier families, and thier communities in other ways than just earning enough moeny to survive.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 7:42:15 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
chulee grove	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SUPPORT with amendments to increase the minimum wage to \$17 per hour and mandate annual cost of living adjustments

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 7:45:51 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
ELIZABETH ANN IGNACIO	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SUPPORT

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 7:55:45 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Andrew Bushnell	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support raising the minimum wage to \$12 a hour this year and hope that it can be raised even further in the next few years. Even \$12 per hour is not enough to live on here in Hawaii. Andrew Bushnell

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 8:05:21 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Marc Delorme	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Yes to SB676, but \$12 falls short and is not realistic. We need to give working families a fighting chance not to fall into poverty. \$18 would be more like it. Please amend this bill.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 8:15:44 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
jacqueline kippert	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

People who work full time need a decent wage! We can no longer expect people to work and not be able to afford basics like food and housing. \$20 ought to be the minimum in Hawaii and we all know that!

What wage do you earn for dear legislators? How many dollars an hour is your wage?

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 8:26:33 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Shanna Therese W Francisco	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I SUPPORT with amendments to increase the minimum wage to \$17 per hour and mandate annual cost of living adjustments.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 8:31:50 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
jeanne lindgren	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am writing in strong support this bill. Is it not reasonable to have to work more than a full-time job just to eke by. We want out parents to put in their time at work and then be home with their families. If not, our tax dollars will go towards remediation of the consequences of children raised in homes where a parent or parents are often absent.

Currently, 10 states and the District of Columbia have minimum wages higher than in Hawai'i. California, New York, Massachusetts, the District of Columbia, New Jersey, Illinois, and Maryland have all passed laws to increase their minimum wage to \$15 per hour, while their costs of living are all lower than in Hawai'i. (Hawaii Appleseed)

Pandemic or no pandemic, 27 other states are raising their minimum wage this year. Hawaii needs to be #28.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Jeanne Lindgren

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 8:42:07 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jody Smith	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Increasing Hawaii's minimum wage is a good start for our working poor. Please support this measure to address our extremely high cost of living. Slow increments increasing the minimum wage should help address this problem. Mahalo.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 8:55:58 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dean Cail	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

A recent article showed that Hawaii is THE most expensive of all 50 states for construction, city rents, and groceries. So to not have wages at a \$15. minimum leaves many workers broke. I worked in Massachusetts in 1960 for the current min. wage of \$1. an hour, which bought four gallons of gas or all the doughnuts you could eat! It's time to catch up!

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 8:59:59 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Valerie Weiss	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in strong support of this bill.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 9:02:58 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Aria Juliet Castillo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am writing int strong support and asking that the bill be amended to continue incremental increases until it reaches \$17 per hour in 2026. I am also suggesting that the committee amend the bill to include annual increases to keep up with the basic cost of living.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 9:09:54 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lisa Kahn Macko	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Senator Kouchi and Honorable Representatives,

I am in strong support of a \$12-15 minimum wage. Hawai'i workers need to earn a living wage and this bill gets us closer to that goal. Please amend the bill to include automatic annual increases and show our community that Hawai'i cares about the welfare of it's workers. Perhaps someday soon, Hawai'i workers will thrive earning a true living wage.

Thank you very much,

Lisa Kahn Macko, Kaua'i

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 9:21:02 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Donna Carsten	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am strongly in favor of raising the minimum wage for Hawaii. Our cost of living demands a higher minimum wage, and while \$12/hour is not nearly enough, it is a beginning.

I would hope that, not only will this bill pass, but that more legislation will raise the minimum to \$17 in the near future.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 9:25:56 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Christopher Boscole	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SUPPORT with amendments to increase the minimum wage to \$17 per hour and mandate annual cost of living adjustments.

With the highest cost of living in the nation, \$10.10 is not a living wage for a single adult in Hawai'i, much less adults supporting children and others. As low-wage jobs become the new normal, working families are falling further and further behind even as the economy continues to grow.

Why \$17 rather than \$15, or some other number?

Any less than \$17 would not be enough to pay for basic needs such as food, housing, transportation, health care, let alone incidentals and emergencies. According to data from the Hawai'i Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism, the self-sufficiency income standard for a single adult with no children in 2016 was nearly \$33,000 per year, or \$15.84 per hour for full-time work with no weekdays off. The self-sufficiency wage for that same adult rises to \$27.00 per hour with the addition of a child.

Due to the large disparity between the current minimum wage and a living wage, many individuals work two or more jobs to maintain a basic standard of living for themselves and their families. While \$17 is a good target for 2019 legislation, inflation and the cost of living will continue to rise. That's why we are asking for legislation to include automatic adjustments based on the consumer price index, to keep the minimum wage at a livable level in perpetuity.

Isn't \$17 an awfully big increase?

The minimum wage has been falling behind the cost of living for more than 35 years. If it had kept up with productivity and inflation, it would be more than \$15 by now. The proposed increase in Hawai'i would not happen overnight. Instead, it would be implemented in steps over multiple years to allow businesses to adjust accordingly. Other high-costs states, such as California and New York, as well as Washington D.C., have already passed laws to increase their minimum wage to \$15 in steps. Our cost of living is higher than these jurisdictions, however.

How would this affect small businesses?

Small businesses need customers. A \$17 minimum wage would put additional money in the pockets of the people most likely to spend in their communities, and the higher wages mean more productive employees and lower turnover for small businesses. Research shows that higher wages raise worker morale, productivity, and loyalty, which reduces employers' turnover, hiring, and training costs.

Price increases are a built-in part of our economic system. Because businesses are under pressure to increase profits, prices go up even when wages don't. Economist Robert Reich says that a \$15 minimum wage is unlikely to result in significantly higher prices because the businesses most affected are in intense competition for customers and would sooner reduce profits than increase prices more than a few cents.

Despite claims to the contrary, decades of research has shown that raising the minimum wage does not increase unemployment rates.

The latest major study, in 2017, found that, on average, [137 minimum wage increases](#) since 1979 reduced the number of jobs paying LESS than the new minimum while also adding jobs paying AT OR ABOVE the new minimum, effectively canceling each other out.

In 2016, President Obama's Council of Economic Advisers looked at [19 recent state-level minimum wage hikes](#) and concluded that "the recent legislation contributed to substantial wage increases with no discernible impact on employment levels or hours worked."

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 9:28:35 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Susan Stayton	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Senators,

I am writing in support of SB676.

This step is the MINIMUM we need to take to help raise the hard working minimum wage people of hawaii out of poverty. Many other states, with lower costs of living than Hawaii, have raised their minimum wage. We need to do so also. Many studies have shown that it does not have the drastic negative effect on jobs that businesses have projected. Our current situation just leads to the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. We are better than this.

I also urge you to include a gradual increase of the minimum wage to \$17/hour which has been shown to be the rate at which a person working 40 hours per week can support him/herself in our state.

Also consider the cost to the government when low wage workers must rely on State aid to make up for what they are not getting from their employers. The corporations and business owners need to be paying their fair share to the workers who enable their profits.

Please do not let yourselves be swayed by the arguments of moneyed interests. Do the right thing for Hawaii's working people.

Mahalo,

Susan Stayton, Lawai, HI

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 9:35:02 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Joseph Brown III	Individual	Comments	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair and members of the Committee,

I strongly support raising the minimum wage, however, this bill doesn't go nearly far enough. Raising the minimum wage to \$12/hr is a slap in the face to Hawai'i's working families. As you know, Congressional Democrats and the Biden Administration are currently fighting to include an incremental \$15 minimum wage increase in the next Covid relief package. Not only does this bill go lower than the national proposal by the Democratic party, but it is well below the \$17/hr needed to survive in Hawaii, as was reported by DBEDT.

I ask that the Committee amend this measure to increase the minimum wage to \$17/hr by 2026, and provide that it should be reviewed annually thereafter to ensure it keeps pace with inflation and economic growth.

In working class solidarity,

Joey Brown

Kailua, 96734

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 3:46:49 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Rodger Hansen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please support this bill and also please amend the bill to continue incremental increases until it reaches \$17 hour in 2026. Also, please amend the bill to include annual increases to keep us with the basic cost of living.

Thank you

Rodger Hansen, Hakalau HI 96710

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 9:37:21 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Anne Freeman	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support the passage of this bill and respectfully request that amendments be considered that will continue incremental increases to \$17 per hour in 2026 as well as annual cost of living increases. Thank you for your attention to this important bill.

Anne Freeman, Koloa, Kauai

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 9:47:12 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Denise Kaufman	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am writing in support of SB676. Too many of us here in Hawaii are working multiple jobs and still not making ends meet. There are citizens living in tents at the beach parks here in Kauai who leave every day for their jobs but can't afford a roof over their heads for themselves and their families. Please please please support this bill. It is my prayer that it continue over time past the \$12 specified here to rise to a true living wage and that by 2026 our workers can earn at least \$17 per hour. Mahalo for taking this request to heart.

Gratefully,

denise kaufman

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 9:57:49 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Linda Kay Ross	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

i hesitate to say that i support this bill, because it is, excuse my language...half ass!!!

meaning, and we all know what it means...you are trying to appease the people you represent by raising minimum wage to \$12, (when 27 other states have already represented their people and raised it to \$15...and Hawaii has the highest cost of living!!!) while at the same time keeping your seat at the good ole boys table, or the mob, or wherever your allegiance obviously lies...instead of with the good hearted, hard working beautiful pelple who trust you are making best decisions for them...

TALK ABOUT A SCAM!! YOU SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF YOURSELVES!!!! HOW DO YOU SLEEP AT NIGHT??

Just so you know, there won't be as many seats on that shuttle to the next planet as they have promised..

Blessings on us all...thank goodness, you can play God, but you aren't God..

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 10:04:39 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
RobertAnn K Goias	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in support of this bill! Prices in Hawaii keep getting higher except the pay. How do you expect us to pay our bills and live a normal life if you keep raising everything except our pay. The change needs to be made.

Council Chair
Alice L. Lee

Vice-Chair
Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez

Presiding Officer Pro Tempore
Tasha Kama

Councilmembers
Gabe Johnson
Kelly Takaya King
Michael J. Molina
Tamara Paltin
Shane M. Sinenci
Yuki Lei K. Sugimura



Director of Council Services
Traci N. T. Fujita, Esq.

COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.MauiCounty.us

February 7, 2021

TO: The Honorable Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair
The Honorable Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

FROM: Gabe Johnson
Councilmember

DATE: February 7, 2021

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF FEBRUARY 8, 2021; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 676, RELATING TO THE MINIMUM WAGE**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to increase the minimum wage.

As a resident of Lānaʻi and a member of the working poor, I know how it is to struggle to make ends meet with such low wages. As it stands now, interns, dishwashers, and many other “entry level” jobs are being paid the minimum-\$10 an hour wage. In the richest country in the world, within a State with many homes over \$5 million dollars this is shameful. I would support this bill with certain amendments that would allow a tiered process that would raise the wage to \$15 per hour. This bill could be better, but it is a start. I thank the Senators for drafting such legislation.

For the aforementioned reasons, I **support** this measure.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 10:20:04 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Elizabeth Wichmann-Walczak	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly SUPPORT this bill, with amendments to increase the minimum wage to \$17 per hour and mandate annual cost of living adjustments. It is essential that Hawaii residents receive a living wage for a single full-time job.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 10:28:12 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
NEIL CLENDENINN	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am strong support but am asking that the bill be amended to continue incremental increases until it reaches \$17 per hour in 2026. I am also suggesting that the committee amend the bill to include annual increases to keep up with the basic cost of living.

Far too many of our friends and neighbors struggle daily, working multiple jobs just to get by. **According to recent studies, 40 hours a week at \$17 per hour is what it takes simply to survive in Hawaii.**

Currently, 10 states and the District of Columbia have minimum wages higher than in Hawai'i. California, New York, Massachusetts, the District of Columbia, New Jersey, Illinois, and Maryland have all passed laws to increase their minimum wage to \$15 per hour, while their costs of living are all lower than in Hawai'i. (Hawaii Appleseed)

Pandemic or no pandemic, 27 other states are raising their minimum wage this year. Hawaii needs to be #28.

Please pass this bill with amendments to increase wages to \$17/hour by 2026.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 10:47:23 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lorraine Newman	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha.

I support passage of this bill, AND I would encourage those of you in support of this bill to amend it to a \$15 minimum wage, with a process in place to raise the amount each year until it reflects a true living wage.

We all know that paying workers poverty level wages ends up costing all of us in the long run (i.e. homelessness, health care, depression and financial need leading to substance abuse and/or crime).

People who are willing and able to work deserve to be able to be self-sustaining.

We also have the benefit of experience now. Many other states have already passed \$15 minimum wage bills, and the change is proving highly beneficial.

As always, the voices in opposition to increasing the minimum wage seem to be the same voices that initially opposed the cigarette smoking and plastic bag bans. These voices are primarily business owners expressing their fear of losing business/money. With the recognition of this fear, I ask you to support the workers who make these businesses profitable with their hours of labor and service. We will all adapt and thrive when everyone can afford shelter and support themselves. When we are thriving we can better support our business community.

Mahalo nui loa,

Lorraine Newman

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 10:49:11 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lanning Lee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

That the current minimum wage is only \$10.10 now is shameful. \$12 is at least a feeble positive gesture. Many of the folks barely subsisting on this minimum are front line workers who have risked their health every day to keep us all going. While \$12 is far below what anyone needs to live decently in Hawai'i, it's a very, very small step in the right direction. A push for \$20 an hour would be the decent thing to do.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 11:05:25 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Raymond Catania	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Senator Taniguchi and Staff,

I support SB676 but with an amendment- that the Bill raises the minimum wage to \$17 an hour by 2026 and with a definite schedule when raises would take place. The Bill is well meaning, but a \$12 an hour raise would not be enough. Mahalo for always showing your support for Hawaii's workers.

Mahalo again,

Raymond Catania 4215 Kole Place, Lihue may11nineteen71@gmail.com

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 11:43:07 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Marcia Kimura	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am writing in support of this increase which is actually long overdue, and should be at \$17 per hour in addition to a cost of living allowance, to significantly help with basic needs in this state. There should be no need for working people to work two or three jobs just to get by.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 11:43:56 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
JoAnn Bishop Freed	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha

I am submitting this testimony to support Senate Bill 676 increasing the minimum wage in Hawai'i from \$10.10 to \$12.00 per hour beginning in July 2022. I also support an amendment to continue incremental increases until it reaches \$17 per hour in 2026. I am also suggesting that the committee amend the bill to include annual increases to keep up with the basic cost of living.

It is so very difficult for families to kep out of the poverty range with these low wages. Low wage earners must work two jobs and even then have difficulty paying the rent and feeding their children. Hawai'i must do mmore to support its children and this would be one step toward doing that,

Thank you,

JoAnn Bishop Fred

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 11:44:00 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Roger Bishop	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support increasing the state minimum wage to \$12/ hr. Long overdue, most states with lower costs of living are moving to \$15. The costs of living should be reflected in a living wage paid. Shameful that Hawaii is not pono in this regard.

Please approve this bill.

Mahalo,

Roger Bishop

Kalaheo

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 11:50:32 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mary Wijas	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

All I can say is that YOU try living on minimum wage for even 3 months to see what lower income people have to do to put a roof over their heads or to feed their families. I worked 2 jobs for many years to do just that and eventually owned my own business as a single mother and even 20 years ago, paid my employees a starting wage of \$16 per hour. There is NO business that will go out of business due to an increase in wages.



MOLOKAI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

P.O. Box 515
Kaunakakai, HI 96748

T 808 658 0608

info@molokaichamber.org

www.molokaichamber.org

February 7, 2021

THE SENATE
THE THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2021

COMMITTEE ON LABOR, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Monday, February 8, 2021 @ 3:00 pm
Conference Room 225
State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street

OPPOSE SB 676, RELATING TO THE MINIMUM WAGE.

Aloha Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts Honorable Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Ihara and Committee Members:

As a representative organization of the neighbor-island of Molokai with dozens of members who employ hundreds of our neighbors, friends and families, we are respectfully submitting testimony to **OPPOSE** SB 676.

Small and micro businesses make up the majority of our island's business community and any additional mandates that increase the cost of doing business could threaten their very ability to stay in business.

It simply costs more to do business on Molokai because of our isolated geographic location, two way shipping cost of goods and products, and our limited economies of scale. Raising the minimum wage is sure to cause many of our businesses a financial stress from which they may never recover.

Any increase in wages is also tied to increased costs for other mandates, such as workers' compensation, temporary disability, unemployment insurance, payroll taxes and other voluntary benefit programs.

Add that to the crippling financial costs of the COVID-19 Pandemic, our businesses just can't shoulder any additional financial burden and don't have anywhere else to turn for relief.

Now is not the time to increase the minimum wage, it is time to focus on economic recovery and save our small businesses that are already struggling from the ongoing impacts of COVID-19.

For these reasons, among others we humbly ask you to oppose this bill and help our businesses stay in business.

Sincerely,

Robert Stephenson, President & CEO



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

The Thirty-First Legislature, State of Hawaii
The Senate
Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 8, 2021

S.B. 676 – RELATING TO MINIMUM WAGE

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO supports S.B. 676 which increases the minimum wage to \$12.00 per hour beginning on July 1, 2022.

Prior to the incremental increases that began in 2015, the minimum wage had not changed since January 1, 2007, which equated to 8 years of salary stagnation for minimum wage employees. Although the current minimum wage is now \$10.10 per hour, Hawaii's high cost of living continues to outpace wage increases. Any increase to the minimum wage will directly benefit those who need it the most – the working class.

Although not contained in this specific measure, we are supportive of additional increases in future years and/or subsequent indexing to the Honolulu Consumer Price Index. We believe these salary increases will help spur Hawaii's economy and generate much needed consumer spending.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of S.B.676.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 12:15:35 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mary Lacques	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Ihara,

I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB 676. As you know, because of the huge disparity between the current minimum wage and a living wage, many of us in Hawai'i work two or more jobs just to maintain a basic standard of living, so I am respectfully asking you to amend the bill to include incremental increases until it reaches \$17 per hour in 2026, preferably annual increases. Mahalo for your continued advocacy for Hawai'i's working families.

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

P.O. Box 37158, Honolulu, HI 96837-0158

Phone/E-Mail: (808) 927-1214 / kat.caphi@gmail.com



COMMITTEE ON LABOR CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Senator Brian Taniguchi, Chair

Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

Monday, February 8, 2021

3:00 PM

SUPPORT w/ AMENDMENT FOR SB 676 – RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE

Aloha Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Ihara and Members of the Committee!

My name is Kat Brady and I am the Coordinator of Community Alliance on Prisons, a community initiative promoting smart justice policies in Hawai`i for more than two decades. This testimony is respectfully offered on behalf of the more than 4,100 Hawai`i individuals living behind bars or under the “care and custody” of the Department of Public Safety on any given day. We are always mindful that 1,000 of Hawai`i’s imprisoned people are serving their sentences abroad thousands of miles away from their loved ones, their homes and, for the disproportionate number of incarcerated Kanaka Maoli, far from their ancestral lands.

Community Alliance on Prisons supports raising the minimum wage to lift our people out of poverty. Although \$12 is better, the ALICE report showing the number of families not making it should be a huge red flag. **We respectfully ask the committee to amend the bill to include language pushing the minimum wage to \$17 per hour by 2026.**

In the 90’s there was a Family Economic Self Sufficiency study that examined how much 10 different family types had to earn to just to serve their basic needs in Hawai`i. At that time it was at least \$25 an hour. While \$12 in 2022 is start, it is nowhere near a living wage. *The living wage is defined as the wage needed to cover basic family expenses (basic needs budget) plus all relevant taxes. Values are reported in 2019 dollars. To convert values from annual to hourly, a work-year of 2,080 hours (40 hours per week for 52 weeks) per adult is assumed. The basic needs budget and living wage are calculated as follows: Basic needs budget = Food cost + childcare cost + (insurance premiums + health care costs) + housing cost + transportation cost + other necessities cost Living wage = Basic needs budget + (basic needs budget*tax rate)¹*

We are now all witness the impact of ignoring data like this in favor of tax credits for corporations, who should be paying their fair share.

¹ LIVING WAGE CALCULATOR, User’s Guide / Technical Notes, 2020 Update, by Carey Anne Nadeau, Open Data Nation Updated 12/22/2019, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology <https://livingwage.mit.edu/resources/Living-Wage-Users-Guide-Technical-Documentation-2020.pdf>

The National Employment and Law Project’s Minimum Wage Basics² series sheds light on key issues related to the minimum wage, drawing on the latest research and campaign developments. A chart in the report shows the increase in earnings from \$9 to \$15:

Hourly Wage Rate						Difference
	\$9.00	\$10.50	\$12.00	\$13.50	\$15.00	in Net Income (\$9.00 – \$15.00)
Hawaii	\$1,425	\$1,515	\$1,595	\$1,688	\$1,820	+ \$395

The key findings of this policy brief are as follows:

- **A majority of workers earning less than to slightly more than \$15 per hour are single adults, and they are ineligible for most public benefits programs.**

According to EPI’s analysis of the impact of a federal \$15 minimum wage, a majority (59 percent) of low-wage workers lifted by a higher wage floor are full-time earners.^[4] Even at low hourly wages, full-time year-round workers without dependents typically earn too much to qualify for many of the nation’s most significant public benefits programs, including the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Medicaid.

- **Most major public benefits programs include phase-outs, not “cliffs.”**

The country’s major public benefits programs generally incorporate gradual phase-outs, not “benefits cliffs,” so that as earnings increase, benefits gradually decrease. Despite the reduction in benefits, these working families’ net incomes remains higher – in many cases, significantly higher – than they were before a wage increase.

- **Child care assistance includes cliff-like features, but with recent federal changes they are less likely to affect workers with low incomes.**

Child care assistance is one of the few major public benefits programs where some participants can experience a “benefits cliff.” However, after recent changes to the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), only a small fraction of those who do receive child care assistance are at risk of a benefits cliff.^[5] Under the 2014 CCDBG reauthorization, states are now required to provide families with a graduated phase-out period if their incomes are above the state entry level for child care assistance, but below the federal cap of 85 percent of the state median income (SMI). During the graduated phase-out period, states may increase family copayments, reducing the potential for and size of a cliff.^[6] To prevent a benefits cliff for child care assistance, and to expand the reach of the program,^[7] Congress and the states should provide the additional funding needed to serve all eligible children, maintain affordable copayments throughout the phase-out, and increase exit-income thresholds to reflect the reality that nearly all families struggle to afford the high cost of child care.

² RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE LEADS TO SIGNIFICANT GAINS FOR WORKERS, NOT TO ‘BENEFITS CLIFFS’, by Yannet Lathrop, September 2020.

<https://www.nelp.org/publication/raising-minimum-wage-leads-significant-gains-workers-not-benefits-cliffs/>

- **A higher minimum wage could help workers in low-wage jobs and their families access medical coverage.**

In states that have not expanded Medicaid, full-time workers without children generally do not qualify for Medicaid. In these states, even parents with very low earnings can face a benefits cliff with a small increase in wages. These workers may fall into a “coverage gap” with incomes too high for Medicaid and too low for subsidies to purchase private insurance through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) marketplace exchanges. The adoption of Medicaid expansion can eliminate this cliff effect. In addition, research published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association Forum* shows that raising the minimum wage improves access to health benefits for workers by helping them afford employer-sponsored health insurance or by allowing them to access ACA subsidies.[8]

- **Whenever cliff-like scenarios occur, lawmakers should see it as an opportunity to review program eligibility criteria and phase-out schedules, making needed adjustments to ensure that workers and their families will continue to access public benefits.**

Keeping minimum wages low to prevent a benefits cliff is harmful policy that makes life worse for workers in the short and long terms. Low wages can condemn workers to a lifetime of poverty, poor physical and mental health, early death, and family disruption; and can prevent them from retiring with some level of economic security in their old age. Given the potential for serious harm to workers, rather than keeping minimum wages low, lawmakers should raise wage floors *and* address cliff-like scenarios when they occur by adjusting eligibility criteria and phase-out schedules so that public benefits continue to be available to those who need them.

It is in the interest of all Hawai'i to lift our people out of poverty. A better decision would be to raise the minimum wage to \$17 in 2026, which is still not a living wage, however, it would give individuals and families a better way to plan and to budget their resources. What more proof do we need than to walk around our communities and witness individuals and families living in doorways and under bridges.

Community Alliance on Prisons urges the committee to be bold and to increase the minimum wage to \$17 an hour in 2026 so that people can survive in one of the most expensive places to live. Let's show our aloha for those in our communities who are struggling every day to make ends meet. This would be the demonstration of aloha that is so desperately needed at this time. Show the people that you care about all of us!

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

"Give light and people will find the way."

Ella Baker

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 12:31:10 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Harriet A. Myers	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support increasing the minimum wage immediately! We must pay our workers enough to feed themselves and their families!



February 8, 2021

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
LABOR, CULTURE, AND THE ARTS
ON SB 676 RELATING TO THE MINIMUM WAGE**

Aloha Chair Taniguchi, and committee members. I am Gareth Sakakida Managing Director of the Hawaii Transportation Association (HTA) with over 375 members involved with the commercial ground transportation industry.

HTA opposes this bill. Hawaii business has suffered a collapse unseen for generations, and have little hope of a sustained rebound in 2021.

Revenue dried up, but expenses remained and continue to grow. Any sort of rebound will not result in fattening wallets, but will have to be plowed into catching up with incurred expenses just to stay in business.

Increasing costs when the economy is flatlined will close more doors and depress the economy further. It is time to focus on aiding our economic recovery NOT adding burdens.

Mahalo.



AMERICANS FOR DEMOCRATIC ACTION

OFFICERS	DIRECTORS		MAILING ADDRESS	
John Bickel, President	Melodie Aduja	John Miller	Bill South	P.O. Box 23404
Alan Burdick, Vice President	Juliet Begley	Jenny Nomura	Zahava Zaidoff	Honolulu
Dave Nagajji, Treasurer	Stephanie Fitzpatrick	Stephen O'Harrow		Hawaii 96823
Doug Pyle, Secretary	Jan Lubin	Lyn Pyle		

February 4, 2021

TO: Chair Taniguchi and LCA Committee

RE: SB 676 Relating to the Minimum Wage

Support for hearing on Feb. 8

Americans for Democratic Action is an organization founded in the 1950s by leading supporters of the New Deal and led by Patsy Mink in the 1970s. We are devoted to the promotion of progressive public policies.

We reluctantly support SB 676 as we support an increase in the minimum wage. People who work forty hours a week should be able to live on their wages. Therefore a seventeen dollar an hour minimum wage makes more sense. Yet perhaps some increase is better than none?

Over 150,000 full-time workers in Hawaii make below the \$35,000 needed for them to afford basic needs. While cost of living is the highest in Hawaii, we are behind eight other states which are on their way to a \$15 minimum wage.

We have heard the argument that a pandemic is not a time to raise the cost of small business operations. Yet has not the pandemic shown us the importance of many front-line workers who try to survive on minimum wage. We don't mind tax credits to small businesses for whom this extra payroll would hurt, but we should not forget those who got us through this pandemic.

Thank you for your favorable consideration.

Sincerely,
John Bickel, President



SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 1:13:32 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Bruce L Hultgren	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please support SB 676. It is not enough, the minimum wage should be higher, BUT this is a step forward. This extra wage money will go immediately into our struggling economy. People making 10.10 and hour and going to 12 are not going to save that money, it will emmediately be spent.

A minimum wage of at least 15-17 dollars must be our goal. Many studies show this is what it takes to merely subsist in Hawaii. Let's us this as a start toward that.

Respectfully,

Bruce L Hultgren

Kailua

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 1:32:09 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
nancy wond	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To Senator Taniguchi,

I am writing in strong support of SB676 which would increase the minimum wage to \$12.00 in July 22,2022

What quality of life can one have here in Hawaii at \$10.10 per hour?

How can a minimum wage worker pay for food and housing on this current meager amount of \$10.10 an hour?

Please vote in favor of Hawaii's minimum wage increase. It will improve the lives of many people in our state.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 1:55:04 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ruth Smith	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please support SB676 to raise the minimum wage to \$12 as a start. Consider amendments that would incrementally increase the minimum to at least \$15/hour over 3 years and add a cost of living adjustment.

This would do so much for our families and especially our keiki's well-being and education. When dad and mom both have 1 or 2 jobs each, they have little time to enjoy and help nurture their children. To improve educational outcomes, the #1 factor is an economically stable home.

It's a remedy that saves money for remediation and rehabilitation that's needed when the basics aren't covered by work income. Beyond the economics, it creates a stable foundation for a social/emotionally healthy, well-adjusted community.

This is the best thing you can do to help improve education anywhere. Give the families a living wage and time to be together.

Mahalo,

Ruth A. Smith

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 2:03:25 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Robert Fontana	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am writing in support of raising the minimum wage to \$12.00 per hour. Hopefully, it will soon be raised to \$15.00 hour as is being slated by the federal government. Hawaii is one of the most expensive states to live in, and \$12.00 per hour doesn't begin to allow one to live here by oneself, but it is a start. Please pass this bill.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 2:06:41 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Don Heacock	Testifying for Kauai Organic Agroecological Systems (KOAFARMS.ORG)	Support	No

Comments:

TO: Senate Chair, Ron Kouchi and Members of the Senate 7February2021

From: Don Heacock representing KOA Farms

Subject: Strong support for SB676, increasing the minimum wage

I and my employees at KOA Farms strongly support SB676. We also support amendments that would allow incremental increases in minimum wage up to \$17 per hour over a few years subsequent to the passage of this bill.

With Hawaii's very high cost of living, the fact that we are headed into a global food crisis due to virtually all of China's crops being destroyed by mass flooding causing China (52% of the global population) to purchase thousands of metric tons of corn, soy and wheat from the USA, and due to the fact that trillions of dollars have been printed (with no gold or silver backing) and put into circulation in the USA economy, we will be facing extreme hyperinflation and increased costs of living in the very near future, therefore increases in minimum wage are badly needed.

Sincerely,

Donald E. Heacock, Owner-Operator

Kauai Organic Agroecological Systems

2265 Hulemalu Road (Niumalu)

Lihue, Kauai, HI 96766

Cell: 808-645-0532

Website: www.koafarms.org

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 2:28:14 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Elizabeth Nelson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I have heard so many stories from families about working 2 and 3 jobs in order to survive in Hawaii. I am in support of SB 676 but would request that Chair Taniguchi amend the bill to include language pushing the minimum wage to \$17/hr. by 2026. It would be so helpful to so many families.

Thank you so much.

Elizabeth Nelson

Kaneohe

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 2:39:20 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Paulette Yoshikane	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I am opposed to raising the minimum wage to \$12. It should remain as is. The minimum wage should be a work entry level wage. If someone has no experience in a job he will then need to be trained. If the employer feels that the employee is doing well, is honest, is diligent in arriving at work on time and is a team player, many times he will give him a raise. If the employee does not get one and thinks he should be compensated, he should talk to the boss or quit and find another job that will pay more. He now has work experience and the next company will not need to waste their time training him.

I have heard of so many young workers get let go because they don't show up for work or they come late and don't inform the company. We should look at the employer's side of the picture.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 2:52:12 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sarah Michal Hamid	Individual	Comments	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Ihara, and members of the Senate Committee on Labor, Culture, and the Arts,

My name is Sarah Michal Hamid and I am testifying today to ask Chair Taniguchi to ammend Senate Bill 676 to \$17/hr by 2026. Mahalo for your time and have a wonderful day.

Sincerely,

Sarah Michal Hamid



Young Progressives Demanding Action
P.O. Box 11105
Honolulu, HI 96828

February 7, 2021

TO: Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts
RE: Testimony in support of SB676 requesting substantive amendments

Dear Senators,

Young Progressives Demanding Action (YPDA) strongly supports the intent of SB676 to raise the state minimum wage. However, we respectfully ask that this committee amend SB676 to establish a genuine living wage for all Hawai'i workers.

Simply put, a "living wage" is a public policy that establishes a minimum wage that is sufficient to cover the basic cost of living in Hawai'i without relying on taxpayer funded government subsidies such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). According to the State Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT), the minimum amount a single worker would need to earn in order to make ends meet is now more than \$17 an hour. Many other studies put the minimum living wage even higher.

We therefore request that this committee amend SB676 to establish an incremental increase in the state minimum wage from **\$10.10 to \$17.00 by 2026**, with the first increase beginning 1/1/2022.

The last 40 years have seen costs, especially those related to housing, skyrocket. But wages for low- and middle-income earners have remained completely stagnant. Our current minimum wage of \$10.10 an hour has less purchasing power today than the 1968 minimum wage of \$1.25 (which is now worth almost \$12).

This problem is making it impossible for an entire generation of young people to build lives in the place they were born. This is creating an unsustainable economic situation in Hawai'i. Without a dramatic change in economic policy toward a system that works for everyone, Hawai'i will cease to be anything more but a playground for the wealthy.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT NOW?

Our economy is powered through consumer spending. Businesses in Hawai'i need customers to survive. The pandemic-recession has made it extremely difficult for Hawai'i's low-wage families (and many middle-wage ones too) to make ends meet in an already high-cost state through reduced employment and wages, as well as through unexpected healthcare and family care costs. When those families do not have enough to cover their basic needs, they stop spending their earnings at Hawai'i businesses. Customers are workers, and workers are customers.

If we want to end this pandemic-recession quickly and with minimal pain and suffering for both businesses and workers, we need to make sure that working families have enough money to act as customers, and the single most effective way to ensure that is to raise the minimum wage to a livable level.

HOW WILL BUSINESSES PAY FOR IT?

Data shows us that in Hawai'i, raising the minimum wage helps small businesses. The number of small businesses and small business employees increased during the last minimum wage hike between 2014 and 2018 (which raised the wage from \$7.25 to \$10.10, or about 10 percent per year).

Businesses have more demand for their goods and services as wages rise across the state, helping them pay their employees more as well.

As low-wage labor is only a small portion of a business's costs, an increase in their prices of just 2 percent can completely compensate for a \$1 per year raise in the hourly minimum wage. Most people are happy to pay slightly more for goods if it means that employees are paid a fair wage.

QUICK FACTS

Fewer than 65 percent of jobs in Hawai'i pay a living wage. The myth that minimum wage jobs are for high school students and not meant to live on is as pervasive as it is false. In fact, fewer than two-thirds of jobs in Hawai'i pay enough to live on, affecting more than 200,000 workers. The reality is that a lot of minimum wage jobs are vital to the health of a functioning society. Simply put, we need people who take these vital jobs—like farm workers, housekeepers, nursing assistants, fishing industry workers, construction workers, and yes, fast food workers—to be able to lead secure, happy lives, so they'll keep doing those jobs. And we should certainly pay them what they're worth to society, which is at least a living wage.

Raising the minimum wage does not cost people jobs. Decades of research shows that raising the wage does not lead to layoffs, as the controversial Seattle study claimed. Businesses would much rather make other adjustments and are almost always able to do so. People working multiple jobs might leave one job once the other pays enough to live on, which would force

businesses to compete for good workers, letting the market do what it does best. Unemployment in Hawai'i decreased by more than 50 percent between 2014, when the minimum wage began rising, and 2018.

Purchasing power will easily out-pace price increases. Another myth that opponents of minimum wage increases like to toss around is that the price increases that accompany wage increases will negate the impact of the wage increases. The average company spends between 30-40 percent of its costs on employee wages. If completely passed on to the consumer, a 10 percent increase in wages each year would translate to a mere 3-4 percent increase in prices. A \$6 sandwich might cost \$6.25 after the first year's increase.

Restaurants in particular raise their prices all the time. It is a built-in feature of the consumer economy. Consumers have no trouble handling these incremental increases normally. They will have even less trouble when their take-home pay increases because of rising wages. This has been repeatedly proven in studies like this one from Purdue University, showing that the average cost of a Big Mac would rise by all of 22 cents, or this one from UMass-Amherst, which found that a wage increase from \$7.25/hour to \$15/hour, phased in over a period of four years, would have little to no impact on the fast food industry's profit margins in general.

The wage increase will not be all at once. Step-by-step implementation at least 10 percent per year will catch us up to where we need to be in a reasonable timeframe while giving businesses ample time to adjust and plan accordingly. This approach has proven successful in both states and municipalities across the country, including Seattle, where a controversial study with serious methodology errors has been debunked.

Raising the wage increases productivity and saves money. Research also shows that businesses that raise their wages attract and retain better workers that show up with higher morale, increased loyalty, and more productivity. Factor in a drop in the cost of constantly retraining new employees, as well as a drop in healthcare costs, and you have got yourself a cost-saving business model—more than enough to cover the wage increase without having to significantly raise prices.

Raising the wage will not cause a massive increase in your tax bill. Contrary to what many people think, if an increase in the wage bumps you up into a higher tax bracket, you do not suddenly pay that higher tax rate on all your income—just on the income difference that put you over the bracket threshold. If your new income is \$100 over the threshold, you only pay the higher tax rate on that \$100, not your entire income. This is called marginal tax rates.

Raising the minimum wage benefits higher wage workers too. Just as a low minimum wage drags all other wages down, a high minimum wage gives workers in the skilled trades more leverage to demand higher wages. In fact, when the minimum wage is increased, everyone making within 150 percent of the new minimum ultimately sees a corresponding increase.

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i supports a livable minimum wage. The party passed a resolution in 2018 supporting a livable minimum wage and the legislative committee has made passage of legislation creating such a wage a priority issue for them. Hawai'i's lawmakers are comprised of a super majority of Democrats.

BACKGROUND

According to economist James Galbraith, raising the minimum wage would raise the incomes of 28 million Americans. Women would particularly benefit because they tend to work for lower wages than men. As Galbraith sees it, raising the minimum wage is family-friendly policy.

To get the economy back on track, spending power must be in the hands of those who spend in the real economy. That means regular people, not the super-wealthy who tend to hoard wealth or invest in financial products. The minimum wage story is not just a story about income inequality, but rather it is about an elite that has hijacked the economic system and made it work less productively than before while redistributing more of what is working to themselves.

During the early part of the post-war period, particularly the 1950s and 1960s, entrepreneurship was more concerned with building productive capacity and putting workers to work making useful things as opposed to creating financial Frankenstein products like credit default swaps.

A higher minimum wage would also help to mitigate the abusive, exploitative working practices of a few employers who take advantage of the currently low minimum wage to seek cut-rate help. Such employers often use undocumented labor, which further undermines America's working poor.

The past 40 years have witnessed a dramatic redistribution of national and personal income in favor of profits for the rich. At the same time, this period has been associated with a dramatic decline in the performance of the U.S. economy. Raising the minimum wage is the minimum we can do for those who have suffered from this economic crisis: the working population. It would be an act of justice, and an economically sound one at that.

Mahalo for your consideration and commitment to working families,

Will Caron
Board President & Secretary, 2020–2021
action@ypdahawaii.org



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
In Support with Amendments of SB 676 – Relating to the Minimum Wage
Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts
Monday, February 8, 2021, at 3:00 PM in conference room 225

Dear Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chairs Ihara, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT, with amendments, of SB 676**, which would increase our state's minimum wage. To achieve the impacts that Hawai'i's working families need, **we respectfully suggest amendments for a more robust minimum wage—one aimed at reaching \$17 by 2026**—still under a true living wage, but getting closer to that target and more in line with what's happening in other high cost of living states.

Financial insecurity directly affects how much families can buy at local businesses. Consumer spending contributes nearly 70 percent to economic growth. Especially with a sharp drop in spending by consumers from out-of-state, raising the minimum wage is a method to maintain consumer demand and support economic growth.

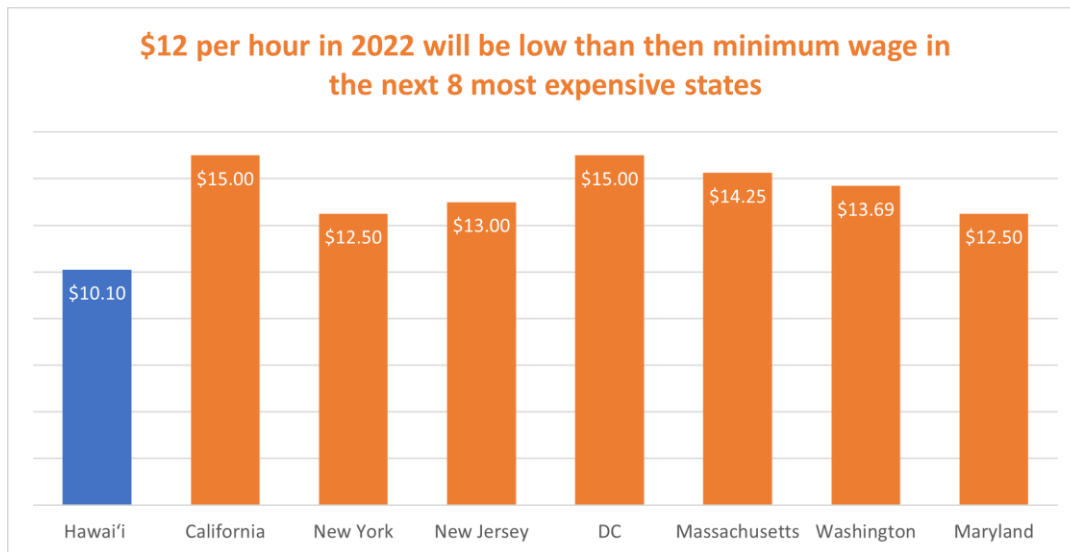
Research shows that increasing minimum wage increases spending,¹ putting money right back into local stores and restaurants. Raising the minimum wage helps keeps money in our state, by directing them at the wallets of local workers, rather than out-of-state corporate headquarters and stockholders.

\$12 an hour, as proposed in this bill, is about \$25,000 a year for full-time work. That's not enough to live on. In the most expensive state in the nation, Hawai'i's minimum wage workers need to make enough to be able to afford the basics.

The last time Hawai'i's minimum wage earners got a raise – to \$10.10 an hour – was January 1, 2018. They already have been stuck at that level – **\$21,000 a year for full-time work** – for more than 3 years. With inflation eroding their pay, \$10.10 now is worth only \$9.62 in 2018 dollars, so full-time minimum wage workers in Hawai'i are losing the equivalent of nearly \$1,000 per year to inflation.

Hawai'i's current minimum wage is already lower than in the other highest cost-of-living states. And Hawai'i will be falling further behind. The **next eight most expensive states**ⁱ have passed laws to **raise their minimum wages to at least \$15** over the next 5 yearsⁱⁱ – and the cost of living in all of those states is *lower* than in Hawai'i.

¹<https://www.epi.org/blog/raising-the-minimum-wage-to-15-by-2025-will-restore-bargaining-power-to-workers-during-the-recovery-from-the-pandemic/>



With those eight other states – all with lower costs of living than in Hawai'i – already on track to raise their minimum wage well past \$15 in the coming years, **please amend this bill to raise Hawai'i's wage to \$17 an hour by 2026**. That would mean an average increase of 11 percent per year – which is less than some of the increases in Hawai'i's minimum wage in the late 1960s, late 1980s, early 1990s, and earlier this century.

How much do people need to make ends meet in Hawai'i? Our state Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism estimates that a single person with no children in Hawai'i needed to earn **\$17.63 an hour to "meet their basic needs" in 2020**.ⁱⁱⁱ Other research groups have pegged basic economic security in Hawai'i even higher.^{iv}

The difference between \$17 an hour and \$13 an hour is more than \$8,000 per year for full-time work. That's much more than the vast majority of low-wage and working-class taxpayers in Hawai'i will receive in tax credits.

We should feel confident that **raising the wage will not harm the job market** in our state. DBEDT recent study of past minimum wage increases in Hawai'i finds that there were few effects on our state's labor market.^v In fact, during our most recent period when the minimum wage rose, between 2015 and 2018, our state's unemployment rate dropped by 52 percent, to record lows, and the number of restaurant server jobs rose by 32 percent.^{vi}

In addition, research looking at past minimum wage increases indicates that they do not cause large price increases. Averaging the best studies available, it is estimated that **raising the wage to \$17 by 2025 would increase prices by a total of less than 5 percent**. That translates to about 7 cents more for a spam musubi in 2025.^{vii} And the last time we raised the wage in this state inflation remained exceptionally low.

Thank you for considering this testimony and our suggested amendments. Boosting minimum wage is key to helping ensure that working families can make ends meet. Without such an increase, working-age people in Hawai'i will continue to struggle. As their struggles increase, and more and more will move to places where they can afford to live, damaging Hawai'i's economy and future. By investing in our people, we can build a stronger Hawai'i.

ⁱ <https://www.bea.gov/news/2020/real-personal-income-state-and-metropolitan-area-2019>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.epi.org/minimum-wage-tracker/>

ⁱⁱⁱ https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/economic/reports/self-sufficiency/self-sufficiency_2018.pdf

^{iv} <https://www.raiseuphawaii.org/media/living-wage-standards-hawaii-2020>

^v <https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/03/minimum-wage-hikes-have-had-little-long-lasting-effect-on-business/>

^{vi} <https://tinyurl.com/RUHquickfacts2020>

^{vii} <https://tinyurl.com/RUHpriceincreases>

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 2:59:17 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
George White	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Ihara and Members -

I write in STRONG SUPPORT of this measure (SB 676) and any measure to increase Hawaii's current minimum wage of \$10.10 per hour. I urge your Committee to be as bold as possible when it comes to this critical quality of life measure.

DBEDT's most recent report regarding this issue demonstrates that a living wage is not only possible, but it is also economically desirable. Further, DBEDT concludes that past increases to the minimum wage did not result in negative economic effects in Hawaii.

Currently, 10 states and the District of Columbia have minimum wages higher than in Hawai'i. California, New York, Massachusetts, the District of Columbia, New Jersey, Illinois, and Maryland have all passed laws to increase their minimum wage to \$15 per hour, while their costs of living are all lower than Hawaii's. In addition, even the federal government is seriously considering raising the federal minimum wage to \$15 per hour. Pandemic or no pandemic, 27 other states are raising their minimum wage this year, and Hawaii should be as well.

Current legitimate and conservative estimates provide that Hawaii's minimum wage should be at least \$17 per hour. Incrementalism is important, so as not to shock our economic system, but prudent decisive action is needed now, as well as continued annual increases that are connected to our basic cost of living.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony, and for your efforts and consideration to provide necessary support for the working individuals and families that make up the backbone of our Hawaii.

Mahalo nui loa -

George White

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 3:14:56 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Joshua Brown Clay	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Hello,

Economic studies have shown time and time again that raising the minimum wage only boosts the local economy and increases the total number of jobs available. It is hard enough to make it in Hawai'i, please just help the people have a decent standard of life here.

Thanks!

Best,

Josh

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 3:24:07 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
marie janiszewski	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

"SUPPORT with amendments to increase the minimum wage to \$17 per hour and mandate annual cost of living adjustments"

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 3:44:29 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Elizabeth Hansen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please support this bill and also please amend the bill to continue incremental increases until it reaches \$17 hour in 2026. Also, please amend the bill to include annual increases to keep us with the basic cost of living.

Mahalo.

Elizabeth Hansen, Hakalau HI 96710

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 3:55:59 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kate Paine	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

This is a step -- though far from adequate -- it's in the right direction to make work more palatable

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 4:16:58 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Alani Bagcal	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Senator Taniguchi, Chair

Senator Ihara, Vice-Chair

Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts

Dear Chair Taniguchi, Vice-Chair Ihara, and esteemed members of the committee

My name is Alani Bagcal and I am writing today in support for SB 676 and to request the minimum amount of \$17 minimum wage by 2026.

Unfortunately \$12 is not enough for a living wage, the people of Hawai'i deserve to have a living wage so themselves and their families not only survive, but thrive. I know Hawai'i has the highest cost of living rate in the entire country. It really does not make sense that the minimum wage is so low, even lower than other states that have a lower cost of living rate.

This is also a racial justice issue, as Rev. Dr. William J Barber II said, "It took Black people 400 years to get from \$0 to \$7.25 in this country. We can't 'build back better' without ensuring a living wage for every American" while explaining that not embracing a federal \$15 per hour minimum wage is deadly racism. I admire his advocacy as I believe this exactly true, and here in Hawai'i Native Hawaiians and other pacific islanders are specifically struggling to make a living wage.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support for this bill and my request for an amendment of a minimum of \$17 per hour minimum wage in Hawai'i.

Alani Bagcal

96815

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 4:45:05 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
dennis miller	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SB 676 RELATING TO THE MINIMUM WAGE. LCA 225 Feb 8, 2021 3:00 PM

Dear Officials,

Low wages result in payment of public benefits for people with low wages.

While some small employers may feel that their business would fail to break even if they had to raise low wage workers wages, many other larger businesses are infamously raking in massive profits off of the backs of low wages for full time employees. Why should the public pay for the poverty assistance of full time workers?

The sooner you begin recalibrating our economy with wages that are closer to a living wage the sooner you will reduce systemic harm caused by growing up and living in the conditions of a low wage household.

Poverty and low wages have a social and physical impact that resonates negatively across every facet of society. Investing in a less stressed society by increasing the minimum wage will pay off for the state in many ways.

It is worth noting that opposition to raising the minimum wage comes from organizations who donate to your political campaigns, and those in favor of raising the minimum wage probably does not include any of your donors.

This does create a picture which suggests that you represent large donors at the expense of the public good.

If you are not supporting raising the mininum wage to \$17 an hour, please provide substantive reasons for ignoring the many negative and costly effects of low wages.

Additionally, why not consider lowing the cost of business in the easiest and quickest way possible: replace unnecessary health insurance bureaucracy with a simplified payment system designed by the Hawaii Health Authority?

Dennis Miller

singlepayerhawaii@gmail.com

2330 Kalakaua Ave St 146

Honolulu, HI 96815

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 5:39:31 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Meredith Buck	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support SB676 and would like to request the following amendments:

- Increase the minimum wage to \$17/hr
- Include annual increases to keep up with the ever-escalating basic cost of surviving in Hawai'i.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 7:04:34 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
jade mcgaff	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please help us with a living wage.

Gratitude,

Jade MCGaff, MD

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 7:52:16 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Laura Michele	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Yes, please be realistic, help people earn a living. \$12 is not enough, at least \$17 because by 2022 inflation will most likely make the need even greater.

Thank you for considering.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 8:07:57 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Deborah Sevy	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am in favor of an increase in the minimum wage. If people in Hawaii are going to be able to just pay their bills the minimum wage needs to be increased to \$17.00 an hour, but any increase is better than no increase. I am in favor of an incremental increase of \$17.00 an hour by 2026 but by then we will probably be seeing hyperflation which will make \$17.00 an hour to little to late.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 8:42:29 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Vince Kana`i Dodge	Testifying for `Ai Pohaku	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha good people!

Am writing in strong support of SH 676 and asking that the bill be amended to continue incremental increases until it reaches \$18 per hour in 2024. Also strongly suggest that the committee amend the bill to include annual increases to keep up with the basic cost of living. Am a small business owner and we must take care of the people who are the foundation of the success of our businesses - the people that work for us. \$12/hr is the least the minimum wage should be right now . You know as well as I do that \$12 an hour is really not enough. How many of you would work for \$12/hr? None of u! And a lot of people who work minimum wage jobs work hard and work difficult hours.

Support SB 676 w the above amendments.

Ku Kia`i Makaanana!- Stand for the regular people!

Aloha Nui!

Vince Kana`i Dodge

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 10:04:13 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Anne	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

While \$12 an hour will not meet the needs of families on Kauai, it is an improvement, and I support it strongly. Please pass this bill.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 10:56:17 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Michael Golojuch Jr	Testifying for LGBT Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

The LGBT Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, Hawaii's oldest and largest policy and political LGBTQIA+ focused organization, supports SB 676 but we request that it be amended to \$17/ per hour by 2026.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration,

Michael Golojuch, Jr.
Chair
LGBT Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 10:57:52 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Pride at Work - Hawaii	Testifying for Pride @ Work - Hawaii	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

the state-wide chapter of Pride At Work (a constituency group of the national AFL-CIO) and an affiliate of the Hawai'i State AFL-CIO, supports SB 676 but we request that it be amended to \$17/ per hour by 2026.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration,

Pride at Work - Hawai'i

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 11:14:02 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Maria Hacker	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha, having been in the tourism industry on Kauai for close to 30 years it has become so clear to me the greed of so many. For years I've heard businesses state that their profits weren't as good as the year before, it's just never enough no matter how much they all make, yet now with this pandemic the truth comes out at how much all these companies were all making since now it's clear that all these businesses have been riding high for years in the backs of the workers making pitiful wages. I myself have had to work three and four jobs to make ends meet when my kids were little, even tho there were two incomes, my husband and mine, but living on Kauai it just doesn't cut it. Businesses don't want to pay a living wage as it cuts into their huge profits. It's a disgraceful system. It forces parents to not spend the time their families need together because they are forced to work multiple jobs just to survive. to keep kids off drugs or other trouble when left alone. \$12 an hour is the bare minimum that the wage should be. To me it's shameful that we are even having a conversation about a minimum wage being \$12 as it should be at least \$20 an hour. Our people making minimum wage can not even afford to pay rent while droves of mainland people are buying up homes sight unseen here on Kauai and local residents couldn't even find a rental prior to the pandemic and that situation is getting worse with mainland homes owners moving here and kicking local residents out of the rentals so they can flee from the Covid ridden mainland. Let's just do the math. 40 hours a week @ \$10 is \$1,600 a month before tax. To rent just a room if you can find one is around \$900 a month. So after taxes, how would you even pay for food, gas, utilities etc. it's a sad joke! Social justice is not at work in Hawaii. The same people fighting a decent minimum wage are the same people that also don't want their taxes going to social programs. It's all a way to keep people down. With a decent wage families could be given hope and a way out of poverty. Mahalo, Maria Hacker, concerned citizen.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 11:17:55 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Diane S. Martinson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support this bill as well as continuing to phase in steady increases in the minimum wage. Businesses need good employees to thrive; employees can only thrive if they are paid a livable wage. The current minimum wage is not a livable wage in Hawai'i. The ripple effect of problems within society that result from wages that aren't "livable" are vast.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/7/2021 11:19:04 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Erynn Fernandez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Mahalo nui for this clear and concise bill, no extraneous verbiage or terms to dispute nor divert with; it is a great first step to getting Hawai'i workers to a living wage.

Erynn Fernandez



TESTIMONY OF TINA YAMAKI, PRESIDENT
RETAIL MERCHANTS OF HAWAII
February 8, 2021
Re: SB 676 Relating to Minimum Wage

Good afternoon Chairperson Taniguchi and members of the Senate Committee on Labor Culture and the Arts. I am Tina Yamaki, President of the Retail Merchants of Hawaii and I appreciate this opportunity to testify.

The Retail Merchants of Hawaii was founded in 1901, RMH is a statewide, not for profit trade organization committed to the growth and development of the retail industry in Hawaii. Our membership includes small mom & pop stores, large box stores, resellers, luxury retail, department stores, shopping malls, local, national, and international retailers, chains, and everyone in between.

While the Retail Merchants of Hawaii appreciates the intent of SB 676 Relating to Minimum Wage; we must respectfully **STRONGLY OPPOSE** this measure as we have some major concerns. This measure increases the minimum wage for certain employees to \$12.00 per hour beginning 7/1/2022.

Over the past year, the retail industry has been one of the hardest hit sectors during this pandemic. On a weekly basis we hear of another retail store or chain closing – from local mom and pops shops to national chain stores. Since the pandemic, those retailers who were deemed non-essential were forced to close their businesses for months due to government orders. Those on Oahu were forced to close their businesses a second time with no income from online sales unless they were fulfilling the orders from home. Retailers have also had to endure an almost 50% rate increase in interisland shipping. Many stores who rely directly on the visitors are not opening until the customer base returns – if they can hold on that long. They have also reduced their staff, taken pay-cuts and more to survive. More recently retailers have begun to adjust by restructuring their business plans and budgets to accommodate the anticipated large increase in the unemployment schedule and rising cost of healthcare and other mandated expenses and to keep their doors open.

Cost would be passed on to the customers, making Hawaii an even more expensive place to live. Retailers realize that if their products are too costly, they will lose the sale. Their customers will seek an alternative retailer online who may not have ties to Hawaii because they offer the item cheaper.

What does a raise in minimum wage mean?

- **Many local small businesses will not be able to afford the \$1.90 per hour wage increase** this bill calls for next year in 2022.
- **Minimum wage increase causes a compression of wages** between newly hired/inexperienced workers and the veteran/experienced employees. Newly hired unskilled employees should not be making more than the seasoned employees who are already trained. As a result, all pay scales are increased while employees will be laid off or departments eliminated to pay for the increase.
- **An increase in payroll costs also leads to increases in benefit costs that are based on wages**, including unemployment insurance, Social Security and Medicare, workers' compensation premiums, and vacation and holiday pay. It is not just a \$1.90 increase in wages per hour that employers must pay for. All other benefit costs would also raise substantially.
- We must also factor in that **Hawaii mandates healthcare coverage for workers**. This is also another benefit that is a cost to employers in Hawaii – as Hawaii is the ONLY states that mandates this.
- **Even more employee layoffs to stay solvent and keep their doors open**. Currently Hawaii's unemployment rate is one of the highest in the nation, and the number will keep climbing as more of our friends, family and neighbors are laid-off to pay for the increase in minimum wage.
- **Potential to cut employee hours**. Many store hours of operations are already reduced and to pay for the increase in wages, employee work hours may be reduced substantially more.
- **Businesses are looking into implementing artificial intelligence and more self-checkout lines** as ways to cut costs to cover government mandates. We are seeing this as more stores are investing in self-checkout counters.
- **Price of goods will increase to cover the increased cost of payroll, thus driving up the cost of living in Hawaii**. Our retailers no longer have competitive pricing and customers go elsewhere or purchase online and not in the stores.

- **With fewer employees, customer service will be negatively impacted** with even longer lines and less employees to assist the customers.

The 3rd Commercial Lease Rent survey from data collected between December 1 and 31, 2020 revealed:

- One in 10 Hawaii businesses permanently closed over the course of the pandemic, and 67 percent were impacted significantly by government restrictions.
- From April through December 2020, 50 percent of businesses did not pay their rent in full.
- Three in 10 businesses expected to miss three full rent payments between October and December 2020, and more than half expected to miss at least one full rent payment between January and June 2021.
- Tourism accounts for at least one-quarter of the overall revenue of 37 percent of Hawaii businesses.
- 86 percent of businesses saw their annual revenue decrease in 2020, and 82 percent expect a decrease in 2021 as well.

Retailers like many businesses are struggling to survive and keep their employees employed. Many cannot afford an increase in doing business. We hope that you will hold this bill.

Mahalo again for this opportunity to testify.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/8/2021 1:59:12 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Justin Mark Hideaki Salisbury	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

We need the minimum wage to be a living wage. If we allow businesses to pay the workers less than the cost of keeping them alive, then that burden is shifted onto taxpayers like you and me.

I wish the minimum wage would include workers with disabilities. Since it does not, I am testifying for a minimum wage that does not apply to me. It is still the right thing to do. One day, this minimum wage will apply to me because the language in HRS Section 387-9 will be repealed, and I will no longer be excluded from this protection. I want this minimum wage to be a living wage when it is extended to me.

Mahalo nui,

Justin MH Salisbury

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/8/2021 2:11:28 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Susan Jaworowski	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

While I support an increase to the minimum wage, and would like to see this bill go forward, it still need serious amendments. First, use Senate Bill 677 as a model as that bill increases the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. This is an amount that a number of states and cities are already applying, and is the level that we need to help ensure that our residents can survive. A \$12 increase is not enough. Please increase the minimum wage to \$15.

Second, there should be a built in schedule of increases so that they rise as the cost of living rises. The fact that a minimum wage increase has to be passed by the legislature every single time has just meant that the minimum wage falls further and further behind from actually supporting an individual. Please build in a cost of living adjustment, similar to the one is SB 285, so that all residents can afford to eat, live, and stay in Hawaii. This is not a great time for employers in Hawaii, but it is a terrible time for employees.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/8/2021 3:44:57 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Christian Palmer	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing to strongly support SB676. The rising cost of living in Hawaii requires that the minimum wage in Hawaii be raised to \$12 to support low income workers. Although some might argue that this will hurt small business owners, that vast majority of small business owners I know already pay more because they value their workers and their contributions. The large hotels and corporate chains are the ones that pay minimum wages and should be required to provide slightly better paying jobs to their workers.

Mahalo,

Christian

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/8/2021 6:33:45 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Monica Stone	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha and mahalo for receiving my testimony. I am in SUPPORT of SB676 and a living wage for all of Hawai'i residents. When I first moved here 5 years ago, I had a job that paid me \$12 an hour. I worked full time and could not cover my living expenses, let alone save or set myself up in anyway. I had no choice but to get a job where I could receive tips because \$12/hour was not cutting it. I was single then, I couldn't even imagine trying to make it work with children or dependents, yet this is the reality that many many Hawai'i residents and Kanaka face. Let's uplift our working class. Mahalo.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/8/2021 7:10:48 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Hunter Heavilin	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support increasing the minimum wage. \$12 is not enough, but it is better than no forward progress at all.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/8/2021 7:35:49 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Colleen Rost-Banik	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please support raising the minimum wage to \$12. We need to do more to support people earning minimum wages. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Respectfully,
Colleen Rost-Banik
Honolulu resident

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/8/2021 7:39:32 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Janet Pappas	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear LCA Committee,

A raise to the minimum wage in Hawaii is long overdue. When people working 8 hour days still do not have enough money to pay for basic necessities, they cannot fully participate in our economy. Please pass this bill without delay.

Thank you.

Jan Pappas

Aiea, Hawaii

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/8/2021 8:16:30 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dirk Koeppenkastrop	Testifying for IL Gelato Hawaii	Oppose	No

Comments:

To:

Sen. Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair

Sen. Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

Members of the Committee on Labor, Culture, and Arts

My name is Dirk Koeppenkastrop, Ph.D and I am the owner of several small businesses in Hawaii. Our biggest business IL Gelato Hawaii. We have a whole sale, catering and four retail locations around Oahu one in Waikiki is already closed. We used to employ over 70 people and due to COVID-19 are down to less than 32. We pay rent in 5 locations and suffer great losses from the shut downs and restricting regulations and lack of tourism. Our revenues are down to less than 50% from prior year and we are losing a lot of money every month.

In our retail stores we hire students and entry-level employees with no skills or experience. We invest into training them. Increasing minimum wages from \$7.25 to \$10.10 has been hurting our business already in the recent years. Rents increased, food cost increased and our profit margins are dropping year by year. Recently we had no other option to increase our scoop prices from \$3.75 to \$4.50 with the result that our sales have gone down. We simply have less people buying gelato from us, as the prices are perceived to be too high.

With COVID all of our businesses are in jeopardy and increasing labor cost will be detrimental to our businesses and livelihood. It is not a good time to increase minimum wage and as it will kill a lot of small businesses and restaurants. Please consider the consequences it will have on our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my concerns.

Dirk Koeppenkastrop, Ph.D.

Owner

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/8/2021 9:46:27 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mimi Beams	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note, I am in full support of SB676. It is time to move forward on a living wage for all hard working people. This is only a start and long over due.

Thank you.

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/8/2021 10:21:50 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Rozlyn Reiner	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As a Hawaii resident citizen for 43+ years, I stand in support of SB676, with proposed amendments.

While it's not \$17 or even \$15, this is a huge opportunity to help working people and proposes to increase the minimum wage to \$12 beginning in July of 2022.

I am herein submitting testimony in strong support and asking that the bill be amended to continue incremental increases until it reaches \$17 per hour in 2026. I am also suggesting that the committee amend the bill to include annual increases to keep up with the basic cost of living.

Far too many of our friends and neighbors struggle daily, working multiple jobs just to get by. According to recent studies, 40 hours a week at \$17 per hour is what it takes simply to survive in Hawaii.

Hawaii's minimum wage is stuck at \$10.10 per hour and we must take action now to ensure an increase.

Currently, 10 states and the District of Columbia have minimum wages higher than in Hawai'i. California, New York, Massachusetts, the District of Columbia, New Jersey, Illinois, and Maryland have all passed laws to increase their minimum wage to \$15 per hour, while their costs of living are all lower than in Hawai'i. (Hawaii Appleseed)

Pandemic or no pandemic, 27 other states are raising their minimum wage this year. Hawaii needs to be #28.

Mahalo for your consideration of this bill which is so important for Hawaii's people.

Rozlyn Reiner

Kekaha, Kauai

rocket.roz@hawaiiantel.net

(808) 652-2373

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/8/2021 10:22:48 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dawn Kubota	Individual	Comments	No

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Dawn and I am a Case Manager at Catholic Charities of Hawaii. I urge you to please amend this bill to support a Living Wage in Hawaii, as defined by DBEDT. You have heard all the arguments for and against minimum wage. All I ask of our representatives is to please focus on providing help to those who need it, rather than punishing those we may personally believe don't deserve it. When we do the latter, everyone suffers. Please support a Living Wage in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

Dawn Kubota

SB-676

Submitted on: 2/8/2021 10:27:51 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/8/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
James McCay	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SUPPORT PLEASE!
Sorry for late input.
Malama Pono,
James