LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

SB144

Bill as Introduced

SB 144 - AS INTRODUCED

2023 SESSION

23-0844
05/04

SENATE BILL ***144***

AN ACT relative to the state minimum hourly rate.

SPONSORS: Sen. Soucy, Dist 18; Sen. Whitley, Dist 15; Sen. D'Allesandro, Dist 20; Sen. Rosenwald, Dist 13; Sen. Prentiss, Dist 5; Sen. Perkins Kwoka, Dist 21; Sen. Chandley, Dist 11; Sen. Fenton, Dist 10; Sen. Altschiller, Dist 24; Sen. Watters, Dist 4; Rep. Schultz, Merr. 29; Rep. Wilhelm, Hills. 40; Rep. Simpson, Rock. 33

COMMITTEE: Commerce

ANALYSIS

This bill provides for increases in the minimum hourly rate.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics.***
Matter removed from current law appears [~~in brackets and struckthrough.~~]
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

SB 144 - AS INTRODUCED

23-0844
05/04

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty Three

AN ACT relative to the state minimum hourly rate.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 Minimum Hourly Rate. Amend the introductory paragraph of RSA 279:21 to read as follows:

279:21 Minimum Hourly Rate. Unless otherwise provided by statute, no person, firm, or corporation shall employ any employee at an hourly rate lower than that set forth in the federal minimum wage law, as amended, ***or the following, whichever is higher:***

From September 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024, $13 per hour.

From July 1, 2024 and thereafter, $15 per hour.

Tipped employees of a restaurant, ***cigar bar as defined in RSA 178:20-a, II,*** hotel, motel, inn or cabin, or ballroom who customarily and regularly receive more than $30 a month in tips directly from the customers will receive a base rate from the employer of not less than 45 percent of the applicable minimum wage. If an employee shows to the satisfaction of the commissioner that the actual amount of wages received at the end of each pay period did not equal [~~the minimum wage~~] ***$15 per hour*** for all hours worked, the employer shall pay the employee the difference to guarantee the [~~applicable minimum wage~~] ***$15 per hour rate.*** The limitations imposed hereby shall be subject to the following exceptions:

2 Minimum Hourly Rate; Contingent Version. The introductory paragraph of RSA 279:21 is repealed and reenacted to read as follows:

279:21 Minimum Hourly Rate. Unless otherwise provided by statute, no person, firm, or corporation shall employ any employee at an hourly rate lower than that set forth in the federal minimum wage law, as amended, or the following, whichever is higher:

From September 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024, $13 per hour.

From July 1, 2024 and thereafter, $15 per hour.

Tipped employees of a restaurant, cigar bar as defined in RSA 178:20-a, II, hotel, motel, inn or cabin, or ballroom who customarily and regularly receive more than $30 a month in tips directly from the customers will receive a base rate from the employer of not less than 45 percent of the applicable minimum wage. If an employee shows to the satisfaction of the commissioner that the actual amount of wages received at the end of each pay period did not equal $15 per hour for all hours worked, the employer shall pay the employee the difference to guarantee the $15 per hour rate. The limitations imposed hereby shall be subject to the following exceptions:

3 Contingency. Section 2 of this act shall take effect on the date the federal minimum wage is increased to $15 per hour, or the minimum wage in the state of New Hampshire is increased to $15 per hour, whichever occurs earlier.

4 Effective Date.

I. Section 2 of this act shall take effect as provided in section 3 of this act.

II. The remainder of this act shall take effect on September 1, 2023.

Committee Minutes

SENATE CALENDAR NOTICE
Commerce

Sen Bill Gannon, Chair
Sen Denise Ricciardi, Vice Chair
Sen Daniel Innis, Member
Sen Donna Soucy, Member
Sen Shannon Chandley, Member

Date: January 31, 2023

HEARINGS

Tuesday	02/07/2023
(Day)	(Date)

Commerce	State House 100	9:00 a.m.
(Name of Committee)	(Place)	(Time)

9:00 a.m.	**SB 143-FN**	establishing a scholarship fund for certain small businesses applying for loans from the capital access program administered by the New Hampshire business finance authority.
9:15 a.m.	**SB 193**	relative to the obligation of collective bargaining units to negotiate in good faith.
9:30 a.m.	**SB 195-FN**	relative to the purchase of steel products with the Buy America certification.
9:45 a.m.	**SB 196**	establishing a minimum amount of uninsured motorist coverage required for vehicles operating as part of transportation network companies in New Hampshire.
10:00 a.m.	**SB 144**	relative to the state minimum hourly rate.

EXECUTIVE SESSION MAY FOLLOW

Sponsors:

SB 143-FN

Sen. Altschiller	Sen. Perkins Kwoka	Sen. Watters	Sen. Whitley
Sen. Fenton	Sen. Rosenwald	Sen. Soucy	Sen. Prentiss
Sen. Chandley	Rep. Mangipudi	Rep. Simpson	

SB 193

Sen. Prentiss	Sen. Watters	Sen. D'Allesandro	Sen. Fenton
Sen. Gannon	Sen. Whitley	Sen. Perkins Kwoka	Sen. Rosenwald
Sen. Chandley	Rep. B. Sullivan	Rep. Soucy	Rep. Muirhead

SB 195-FN

Sen. Carson	Sen. Ricciardi	Sen. Fenton	Sen. Lang
Sen. Abbas			

SB 196

Sen. Innis	Sen. Gannon	Rep. Berry	

SB 144

Sen. Soucy	Sen. Whitley	Sen. D'Allesandro	Sen. Rosenwald
Sen. Prentiss	Sen. Perkins Kwoka	Sen. Chandley	Sen. Fenton
Sen. Altschiller	Sen. Watters	Rep. Schultz	Rep. Wilhelm
Rep. Simpson			

Aaron Jones 271-2609

Bill M. Gannon
Chairman

Senate Commerce Committee

Aaron Jones 271-2609

SB 144, relative to the state minimum hourly rate.

Hearing Date: February 7, 2023

Time Opened: 10:00 a.m. **Time Closed:** 10:55 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Innis, Soucy, Chandley and Gannon

Members of the Committee Absent : Senator Ricciardi

Bill Analysis: This bill provides for increases in the minimum hourly rate.

Sponsors:

Sen. Soucy	Sen. Whitley	Sen. D'Allesandro
Sen. Rosenwald	Sen. Prentiss	Sen. Perkins Kwoka
Sen. Chandley	Sen. Fenton	Sen. Altschiller
Sen. Watters	Rep. Schultz	Rep. Wilhelm
Rep. Simpson		

Who supports the bill: 109 individuals were in support. Full sign in sheets are available upon request by contacting the Legislative Aide, Aaron Jones (aaron.jones@leg.state.nh.us).

Who opposes the bill: Henry Veilleux (NH Lodging & Restaurant Association), Bruce Berke (NFIB), Julie Smith, Cindy Kudlik, Curtis Howland, Greg Moore (Americans for Prosperity-NH), Zephan Wood, Simon Berrio, Jesse Medeiros, Bill Alleman, Kathleen Wikstrom

Who is neutral on the bill: No one

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Senator Donna Soucy

- Senator Soucy said this had been the tenth anniversary of her sponsoring minimum wage legislation.
- This bill would incrementally increase the minimum wage to $13 an hour by September 2023 and $15 an hour by July 2024.
- Twenty-seven states have increased their minimum wage statutes, including many at the beginning of the new year.
- In NH, the minimum wage is $7.25 an hour. In contrast, it is $13 an hour in RI, it is $13.18 in VT, it is $13.80 in ME, and it is $15 an hour in MA and CT.

- Since NH is bordered by three states, Senator Soucy said it is important to focus regionally.
- When compared to surrounding states, the minimum wage in NH ranges from $5 to $7 less per hour.
- States have responded differently to address wage inequities.
    - OR has based increases on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), for example, and wages differ in rural and urban areas. The Portland metro area has set their minimum at a $1.25 above the standard wage; whereas, rural counties are set at a $1 below the standard wage.
- Senator Soucy said the pandemic exposed issues, such as low pay and financial insecurity, and it was time to fix them amid labor shortages and rising inflation.
- According to the CPI, national inflation rose to 8.3 percent between August 2021 to August 2022.
- Eleven states (AK, AZ, CO, ME, MN, MT, NJ, OH, SD, VT, and WA) and the District of Columbia have statutory requirements for raising their minimum wage in line with inflation.
    - In AZ, for example, the hourly minimum wage has increased a $1.05 to a total of $13.85 per hour.
- Despite businesses offering $15 an hour, workers still cannot be found to fill positions. Senator Soucy said workers have evaluated what their time means to them.
- Senator Soucy said a strong workforce is needed to support citizens who have paid into the system over the years and who are depending on services to be available.
- Critical shortages in job areas, such as long-term care, coupled with housing shortages, a 0.5 percent rental vacancy rate, and rising rents have made it important to allow people to thrive.
- Despite working full-time, Senator Soucy said some employees are forced to turn to government assistance.
- If someone worked 40 hours a week, and they earned $7.25 an hour, they would make $15,000 a year. Senator Soucy said that was below the federal poverty level, and the ability for someone to find housing and adequate services for themselves and their families.
- Minimum wage jobs exist across various sectors.
- According to the NH Fiscal Policy Institute, there are about 100,000 Granite Staters living in poverty. Approximately, one-in-four households earned less than $50,000 per year in income, and more than one-in-six earned less than $30,000.
- In 2013, the average cost of a two-bedroom apartment including utilities had been $1,076. Currently, it is $1,584 yet wages have remained the same.
- Senator Soucy said raising the minimum wage would have the most impact on low wage workers, and it would reduce spending on state assistance programs. Senator Soucy said they were essentially subsidizing entities who provided low pay.

- According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, roughly 20 percent of workers who earn their state minimum wage are 45 years or older.
- In 2021, the Legislature lowered the Business Profits Tax, yet it seemed to Senator Soucy that they also should recognize the need to benefit those who live at the poverty line.
- During the pandemic, there were minimum wage workers who were called into their service jobs and they were considered essential. If they were deemed essential during a public health pandemic, Senator Soucy said their salaries should reflect the reality of existing financial circumstances.
- Senator Soucy said raising the minimum wage would send a message to those who would like to come here and the rest of the country that NH values its workers.
- **Senator Innis** asked what the average hourly wage was for non-salaried employees in NH.
    - **Senator Soucy** responded she could get those numbers from Employment Security.

Alan Raff, NH AFL-CIO

- In the third quarter of 2022, NH ranked as the eleventh most costly state.
- Mr. Raff said that $7.25 an hour had been woefully inadequate.
    - Without spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing, an employee would need to work at least 100 hours per week to afford a one-bedroom apartment.
    - If a worker had a child and required a two-bedroom apartment, then they would need to work 145 hours per week.
- According to MIT, a single adult without a child in NH would need to earn at least $17 per hour.
- More than half of the population lives within 30 minutes of a border. If someone needs more money, then they are likely to commute for $5 extra an hour.
- If the goal were to expand the economy, grow the workforce, and continue down a path of economic success, then Mr. Raff said they needed to pay people more money.
- Perception is reality, and if someone perceives they will make more money elsewhere, then Mr. Raff said it would be economically irresponsible for them not to take it.
- Given the free market principles involved, Mr. Raff said they knew workers would work harder when they were compensated appropriately for their work. When an individual has been given dignity, Mr. Raff said they are likely to go the extra mile for themselves and their employer.
- When a worker can enjoy what the state has to offer, Mr. Raff said they help to build the local economy, contribute to the livelihood of small businesses, and amplify the NH advantage.

- Mr. Raff acknowledged that being an employer was expensive; however, if individuals are compensated appropriately for their work, then they help to make the business better and a better business can make more money.
- Since NH does not follow the lead of others, Mr. Raff concluded that we should adapt responsibility so that we can grow exponentially and retain our place in the country.
- **Senator Innis** asked what the state unemployment rate for NH was compared to the states that have a higher minimum wage because a case had been made that employees would work elsewhere and pay income tax.
    - **Mr. Raff** said they have had a hard time getting people to work in NH since they can go to MA and make more money.
- **Senator Innis** asked why employers would not raise wages because that is how the free market worked. If someone were to go on Indeed, they would not find jobs less than $13 an hour.
    - **Mr. Raff** replied people are happier when they are paid more, and a happy employee is a better one.
- **Senator Innis** replied that Bill Marriott once said that the most important people in his hotels were the employees.

Linda-Ruth Berger

- As a licensed clinical mental health provider, Ms. Berger has witnessed first-hand the negative impact poverty and economic hardship have had on the mental health of families and children.
- Ms. Berger said that sub-livable wages have created environments where parents are in a chronic state of anxiety, stress, depression, and despair. Consequently, these factors can lead to increased anger, parental absence, the inability to regulate emotions, self-devaluation, depression, domestic violence, parental neglect, substance abuse, or even suicide.
- Ms. Berger stated that asking hardworking citizens to accept the minimum wage communicated to them that the state did not value their dignity, their lives, or the lives of their families.
- Ms. Berger said being treated as disposable, while fighting for economic survival, can lead to anti-social behavior as well.
- With the creativity and resourcefulness of the Legislature, Ms. Berger believed they could find solutions to support businesses without placing weight on the back of the lowest paid and hardest working citizens.
- Ms. Berger said they are unable to help people get stronger when the ground has continued to fall out underneath them.
- Ms. Berger urged the Committee to consider the well-being of families, children, and communities by raising the minimum wage to a livable wage.
- Primary care physicians and mental health professionals have begun using the Adverse Childhood Experience scale from the CDC on children up to 17 years old. Their first suggestion on how to prevent mental illness in children is to support financial security.

Viola Katusiime, Granite State Organizing Project

- If the minimum wage had kept up with productivity growth since 1960, it would be more than $25 an hour.
- Since 2009, Ms. Katusiime said wages have been left stagnant despite the cost of goods and services increasing.
- In 2019, Raise Up NH invited legislators to participate in a challenge where they earned minimum wage for a week. Those who participated said it had been difficult to do things, such as buy groceries.
- When she worked in retail, Ms. Katusiime said employees contributed canned food to other employees despite working for a multimillion-dollar company that could afford to raise wages.
- In 2021, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics found that 9,000 workers in NH were making $7.25 an hour. There were over 101,000 workers making less than $15 an hour.
- Ms. Katusiime said this bill would put NH on a path toward a living wage.
- During the pandemic, the GSOP opened a clinic to help tenants apply for rental assistance as well as connect them with services.
    - One tenant worked full-time making $16 an hour, and had to work 50 hours a week, to qualify for a one-bedroom apartment. Ms. Katusiime emphasized this had been the reality for workers who could not afford a place to live.
- When people have more money, Ms. Katusiime said they can live an independent life without public assistance and they can help the local economy by spending money on day-to-day services.

Rev. John Gregory-Davis, Meriden Congregational Church

- Reverend Gregory-Davis said NH had inflicted citizens with the "NH Dis-Advantage" by having the lowest minimum wage of any state in New England.
- According to Reverend Gregory-Davis, the current minimum wage has led to two moral travesties.
    - First, people are unable to support themselves no matter how hard they have worked.
    - Second, no one would wish to see anyone they know or love be forced to work for inadequate compensation.
- In 1933, President Roosevelt proposed a living minimum wage because he considered it morally and humanely untenable that working people could not support themselves through their labor.
- Reverend Gregory-Davis emphasized that all labor has dignity. If an individual is required to do a job, then they deserve to be adequately compensated.
- Reverend Gregory-Davis urged the Committee to adopt this long overdue legislation to acknowledge the humanity of every worker.
- **Senator Gannon** asked if he believed his daughter, who is fourteen, deserved a living wage.

    - **Reverend Gregory-Davis** replied he would like to see a livable wage. He asked Senator Gannon if he believed his daughter were worthy of being paid.
- **Senator Gannon** said his daughter did not need a living wage to support herself.
    - **Reverend Gregory-Davis** responded that there are 9,000 people who are paid the minimum wage despite having families. He believed every person was worthy of a living wage, and he emphasized that if a job required a person, then they deserved to be paid adequately.
- **Senator Gannon** viewed the minimum wage as a training wage for young people.
    - **Reverend Gregory-Davis** said if it were paid only to young people; however, this had not been the case. Senator Gannon had been talking about a specific situation; whereas, it was a situation that applied to more people.
- **Senator Gannon** said as his daughter is worth more, she could go to Dunkin Donuts.
    - **Reverend Gregory-Davis** contended that she was worth that now.

Claudia Istel, Raise Up NH

- Ms. Istel reiterated that approximately 9,000 workers in NH earn $7.25 an hour or less, which accounted for 2.3 percent of the workforce. Approximately, 150,000 workers in NH earn less than $15 an hour, which accounted for about 20 percent of the workforce.
- Workers could be eligible for public assistance programs because they are not earning enough to cover basic needs, such housing, food, clothing, medical care, and transportation.
- Safety net programs were designed to help people in temporary or unfortunate circumstances instead of being a way for them to make ends meet. Additionally, these programs are paid for by the taxpayers, so Ms. Istel wondered why they were subsidizing businesses.
- According to the Economic Policy Institute, raising the federal minimum wage to $15 an hour would lift wages for an estimated 32 million workers at a cost of about $108 billion dollars. Even with an incremental increase, Ms. Istel said the effect on prices would be less than 1 percent.
- For better paying jobs, many workers have pursued higher education and training. Consequently, there are worker shortages in essential jobs ranging from highway workers to nursing assistants to educational paraprofessionals. In these essential occupations, Ms. Istel said workers have been demoralized and stressed, which has taken a toll on their physical and mental health.
- In NH, the National Employment Law Project and the Economic Policy Institute found wages were below the cost of living for the following occupations: wait staff, fast food cooks and workers, dishwashers, cashiers, substitute teachers, restaurant hostesses, laundry workers, childcare workers, retail workers,

housekeepers, home health aides, nursing assistants, teaching assistants, and paramedics. Ms. Istel said these workers were needed for society to function; thus, they should be respected by receiving a decent wage.

- Ms. Istel said inflation has most impacted low wage workers as prices have increased for food, housing, and energy.
- In 2020, Ms. Istel said people were using pandemic relief checks to cover basic expenses; however, they are now relying on food pantries, church relief funds, and public assistance programs.
- As consumers reduce their discretionary spending, Ms. Istel said it is low wage workers in the service and retail industries that are among the first to see their hours reduced or jobs cut.
- Ms. Istel said this bill made a conservative move in the right direction; however, she recommended the Committee amend the bill to include a cost-of-living adjustment each year, which would prevent workers from falling behind by allowing them to retain their purchasing power.

Summary of testimony presented in opposition:

Henry Veilleux, NH Lodging & Restaurant Association

- The Association opposed this bill because the Legislature had modified the tipped wage statute two years ago.
- In that legislation, it stated that if the federal minimum wage were increased, then the tipped wage would be set to $3.27. This bill would remove that language, and it would permanently set the tipped wage at 45 percent of the applicable minimum wage.
- Mr. Veilleux said tipped employees are not minimum wage workers; instead, they are among the highest paid.

Bruce Berke, National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB)

- The NFIB opposed this bill for several reasons.
    - First, they were concerned that mandating a certain minimum wage would establish an artificial threshold that had not been market driven. Consequently, this could lead to fewer jobs and hours for employees.
    - Second, they were concerned there would be fewer businesses and opportunities for employees.
- Starting wages for the tourism industry this winter have ranged from $16 to $20 an hour. Mr. Berke emphasized that these were beginning wages for beginning roles.
- Mr. Berke believed they had seen a market that had been working for employees, and NH had been ranked as having the best economy in the Northeast.
- Another concern raised was wage compression wherein there would be an upward pressure placed on the wage scale. If someone were making $16 an

hour, and the minimum wage were raised to $15 an hour, then an individual may want a higher wage. Mr. Berke said creating this dynamic would have an impact on small businesses.

- **Senator Innis** asked what would happen if there were an upward spiral in wages.
    - **Mr. Berke** responded that businesses have finite resources or revenues, which could lead to fewer work hours, layoffs, a transition into automation, or closure.
- **Senator Innis** asked if there would be an impact on prices.
    - **Mr. Berke** responded without a doubt.
- **Senator Innis** asked if it were easier for larger businesses, such as Walmart or Target, to adapt to a minimum wage increase than it would be for smaller businesses.
    - **Mr. Berke** replied he did not know.
- **Senator Gannon** said there was a pizza restaurant in Sandown that said if the minimum wage were increased, then they would not be able to afford it and prices would increase. For small businesses, Senator Gannon asked if labor were a fixed percentage compared to materials or overhead costs.
    - **Mr. Berke** responded he did not know the answer, but it would differ from business type to business type.
- **Senator Gannon** asked how much a large pizza cost in his hometown.
    - **Mr. Berke** replied it was at least $17.99 depending on the toppings.

Neutral Information Presented: None

AJ
Date Hearing Report completed: February 10, 2023

Speakers

Senate Commerce Committee
SIGN-IN SHEET

Date: 02/7/2023 **Time:** 10:00 a.m.

SB 144 An ACT relative to the state minimum hourly rate.

Name/Representing *(please print neatly)*	Support	Oppose	Speaking?	Yes	No
Alan Raff New Hampshire AFL-CIO	☒	☐		☒	☐
Glenn Brackett New Hampshire AFL-CIO	☒	☐		☐	☒
Donald J Bouchard State Rep Hillsborough 24	☑	☐		☐	☑
MERRYL GIBBS STATE REP MERRIMACK 23	☒	☐		☐	☒
Brian Hawkins NEA-NH	☒	☐		☐	☒
Henry Veilleux NH Lodging & Restaurant Assoc	☐	☒		☒	☐
John Gregory-Davis NH Conference United Church of Christ	☒	☐		☒	☐
Lindsay Ruth Berger	☒	☐		☒	☐
Bruce Berke - NFIB	☐	☒		☒	☐
Viola Katusiime, GSOP	☑	☐		☑	☐
Marco Lacasse IBEW	☑	☐		☐	☑
Kris Schultz St Rep	☒	☐		☐	☒
Claudia Istel, Sey	☒	☐		☑	☐
Istel?	☐	☐		☐	☐
	☐	☐		☐	☐
	☐	☐		☐	☐
	☐	☐		☐	☐
	☐	☐		☐	☐
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Senate Remote Testify

Commerce Committee Testify List for Bill SB144 on 2023-02-07

Support: 99 Oppose: 9

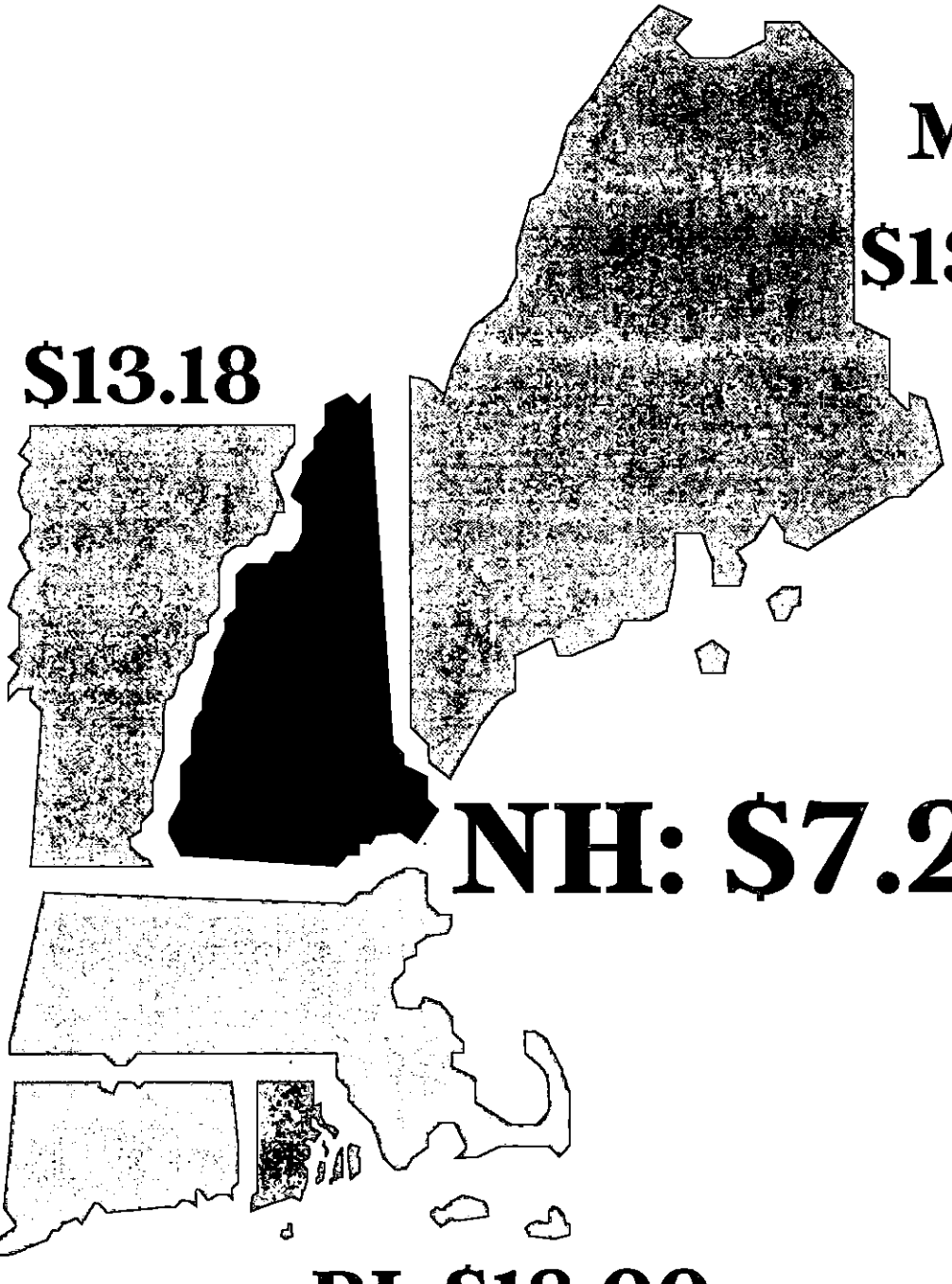
Name	Title	Representing	Position
Smith, Julie	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose
Rosenwald, Cindy	An Elected Official	SD 13	Support
Smith, Hayden	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Watkins, Dan	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Casino, Joanne	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Mott-Smith, Wiltrud	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Istel, Claudia	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Damon, Claudia	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Zollo, Lnda	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Kudlik, Cindy	An Elected Official	Myself	Oppose
Coon, Kate	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Caudill Slosberg, Margaret	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Hackmann, Kent	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Bergevin, Leslie	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Zavgren, john	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Pitt, Martha	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Pitt, Timothy	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Vincent, Laura	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Meserve, Barbara	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Platt, Liz-Anne	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Howland, Curtis	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose
QUISUMBING-KING, Cora	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Benham, Linda	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
DeMark, Richard	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
DeMark, Harriet	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Jones, Andrew	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Devore, Gary	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Geary, Fiona	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Straiton, Marie	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Satterfield, Peter	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
HALLOCK, LINDA	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Spielman, Kathy Sue	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Keeler, Margaret	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Lindpaintner, Lyn	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Simpson, Alexis	An Elected Official	Rockingham District 33	Support
Podlipny, Ann	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Farnum, Ellen	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Tiernan, Cullen	A Lobbyist	SEA SEIU 1984	Support
Campbell, Karolyn	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Raspiller, Cindy	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
MacGregor, Leslie	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Holstein, Susanne	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Brown, Howard	An Elected Official	Myself	Support
Hoover, Claudia	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Moore, Susan	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Rettew, Ann	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Moore, Greg	A Lobbyist	Americans for Prosperity-NH	Oppose

Torpey, Jeanne	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Fudge, Kim Marie	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Wessels, Susan	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Merlone, Lynn	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Thomas, A	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Hershey, Jane	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Martin, Patricia	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Bissex, Hannah	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Anastasia, Patricia	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Van Dusen, Danielle	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
RHOADES, CHUCK	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
D'Allesandro, Lou	An Elected Official	SD20	Support
Koch, Laurie	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Wood, Zephan	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose
Berrio, Simon	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose
Laker-Phelps, Gail	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Widger, Barbara	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Pugh, Barbara	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Schnell, Robin	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Kindeke, Grace	A Lobbyist	Myself	Support
Richman, Susan	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Keegan, John	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Burnett, Ophelia	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Perencevich, Ruth	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Cote, Lois	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Bishop, Nancy	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Crompton, Misty	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Richards, Matthew	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Campbell, Karen	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Thomas, Linda Garrish	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Lamphier, Regan	An Elected Official	Myself	Support
Kinney, Rev. Dr. Gail	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Watters, Senator David	An Elected Official	Myself	Support
Medeiros, Jesse	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose
Perkins Kwoka, Senator Rebecca	An Elected Official	Myself	Support
Corell, Elizabeth	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
hampton, doris	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Hokanson, Kimberly	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Ufford, Letitia	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
PELLETIER, DAVID	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Slade, Andrew	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Alleman, Bill	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose
Altschiller, Senator Debra	An Elected Official	Myself	Support
Walker, Deborah Klein	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Fuentes, Sebastian	A Lobbyist	Rights & Democracy NH	Support
Howes, Debrah	A Lobbyist	American Federation of Teachers - NH	Support
Wikstrom, Kathleen	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose
Fenton (SD 10), Senator Donovan	An Elected Official	Myself	Support
Blanchard, Sandra	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Moquin, Larry	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Spechuilli, David	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Liebowitz, Susan	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Weber, Jill	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Davidson, Geri	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Chase, Karen	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Craig, Joyce	An Elected Official	Myself	Support

Woodward, Jane	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Heath, Ruth	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Baucom, Pam	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Billingham, Carla	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Boudman, Roberta	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support

Testimony

New Hampshire's Minimum Wage Crisis



ME: $13.80

VT: $13.18

NH: $7.25

MA: $15.00

CT: $15.00

RI: $13.00

February 7, 2023

Testimony of New Hampshire AFL-CIO in Support of Senate Bill 144, Relative to the State Minimum Hourly Rate

Thank you, Chairman, and Honorable Committee Members:

I come before you today on behalf of the New Hampshire AFL-CIO and it's over 35,000 members, to urge you to vote Ought to Pass on Senate Bill 144. As the Committee well knows, New Hampshire is an expensive state to live in. As of the third quarter of 2022, the 11th most costly state, in fact. As an organization that represents workers across all of New Hampshire's employment sectors, we have a unique perspective on the true cost of living in the Granite State. The metrics are well-known to anyone who works or owns a business here. And in 2023, a wage of $7.25 per hour is woefully inadequate to support those working for it. To cite just a few examples, a minimum wage worker would need to work over one-hundred hours per week just to afford a 1-bedroom apartment without spending more than thirty percent of their income on housing. That number goes up to 145 hours a week if that worker has a child and needs a 2-bedroom apartment. According to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a single adult without children in New Hampshire needs to earn more than $17 per hour to make ends meet. A single adult raising children obviously needs to even more. The current state of inflation has made these conditions even worse.

I have sat through hundreds of hearings, meetings, and seminars here in the state where advocates and politicians talk about the importance of retaining workers, both young and not so young. I can tell you, as someone who was once young, that one of the key factors for getting us to stay, is being able to make money and having enough of that money to allow us to enjoy the amazing things that our state has to offer. Here, in New Hampshire, where well over half of our population lives within thirty minutes of the state border, and those bordering states each have a minimum wage that is $13.00 or more, if you need to make money, you are going to make that commute for those $5.00 extra dollars an hour. You get $5.00 extra dollars an hour for your efforts, and these are contracts that aren't even bargained for.

We like to do things in New Hampshire the New Hampshire way. We don't follow the path of other states because we have our own way of doing things. It's one of the great things about our state. But if our goal, as we all say that it is, is to expand our economy, grow our workforce, and continue on our path of economic success,

we need to pay people more money to work here. **Perception is reality.** And if you perceive that you are going to make more money, and live a more comfortable life because you know that you are guaranteed $13.00 an hour in Maine, Vermont, or Massachusetts, you would be economically irresponsible not to go and earn those wages to provide for your family.

We understand the arguments against it, and the importance of free market principles, and it is because we do understand those principles that we know that workers work harder when they are compensated appropriately for their work. We know that when they have dignity in their work, they go the extra mile for their employer and for themselves. And that is why we support Senator Soucy's bill; because you need to be able to provide for your family, and live your life to have dignity. And in New Hampshire, you want to be able to enjoy the amazing things that our state has to offer, be it our beaches, our mountains, or our breweries. And when a worker can enjoy those things in the state they live in, they build the local economy, contribute to the livelihood of small businesses, and amplify the New Hampshire advantage.

Running a business is hard work, and being an employer is expensive, but we all know that if you are compensated appropriately for your work, **you take pride in that work,** and you make the business that you work for a better business. **And a better business makes more money**. When people make enough money to keep the lights on, put food on the table, and also have the funds available to take their family camping in the White Mountains, that helps our employers, their employees, and the state's economy.

We don't follow the lead of any state in New England or the country for that matter. We never have. We do things our way. So let's do this the New Hampshire way, and show up our neighboring states. We have a great thing going here, but we can make the economy even better, stronger, and more resilient. And that is the New Hampshire way, to adapt responsibly, grow exponentially, and retain our unique place in this great country. That is why we urge the committee to vote ought to pass on Senate Bill 144.

Thank you for your time.

Testimony on SB 144 in Support of Raising the Minimum Wage
before the Senate Commerce Committee
February 7th, 2023
+++++++++

Rev. John M. Gregory-Davis, Co-Pastor
Meriden Congregational Church, UCC
P.O. Box 187, Meriden, NH 03770
John@Meridenucc.org, 603-469-3235

Good Morning. I am the Rev. John Gregory-Davis, and along with my partner, Susan, I co-pastor the Congregational Church in Meriden. I come before you this morning as a member of the Clergy Caucus of the Granite State Organizing Project, and as Co-Chair of the Economic Justice Mission Group of the NH Conference of the United Church of Christ. And it is both as a local church pastor, and as a member of the largest protestant denomination in NH, which has consistently advocated for raising our state's shamefully low minimum wage, that

I firmly SUPPORT SB 144.

For far too long now, we have inflicted upon our fellow citizens the NH Dis-advantage of having the lowest minimum wage by far of any state in New England. Unlike every other New England state, NH has had no minimum wage for over a decade now, with the exception of the embarrassingly low federal minimum wage of $7.25 per hour. One need not be an economist to understand 2 obvious moral travesties of this situation--first that no one can support themselves, no matter how hard they work, on this paltry wage, and secondly, that none of us would wish to see anyone we know or love forced to work for such inadequate compensation.

The contention that the minimum wage was never intended to be livable is patently false "fake news." On the contrary, it was precisely because he considered it morally and humanely untenable that working people not be able to support themselves through their labor that President Roosevelt proposed a "living wage" minimum back in 1933. Yet as a state we have chosen so to devalue the labor and the dignity of our fellow citizens as to be a wage sinkhole in New England. How can anyone oppose remedying such an injustice? How can we choose not to pay workers the wages needed to support themselves and their families? How do we live with knowing that our state chooses to allow more than 9,000 of our neighbors to be paid starvation wages?!

From a moral, and economically just perspective, this is not complicated. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. insisted that "ALL labor has dignity" and thus deserves to be adequately compensated. This is not about the economic worth of any job, nor the skills of the person doing the job, but rather about the person themselves. If a job needs to be done by a human being, then regardless of what that job is, the person doing it deserves to be paid at least the minimum needed to live on.

And the good news is that we *can* do better. We *can* choose to reclaim the original vision of FDR. We can choose to follow the lead of every other New England state. And perhaps most importantly, we can choose to reclaim our humanity through acknowledging the humanity of every worker with wages worthy of their personhood.

SB 144 begins to move us in this long overdue direction. It is not enough, but it is a critical beginning. **For the sake of every worker in our state, and for the sake of our shared humanity, I urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" on SB 144.** This is an injustice we can easily address, and now is the time to do so. Thank you.

Testimony for SB144 Linda-Ruth Berger, MACP, LCMHC

Good morning. My name is Linda-Ruth Berger. I live in Contoocook and practice as a mental health provider here in Concord.

I've come to share with you my experience about what impact our present minimum wage has on the mental health of individuals, families and communities in our state. I hope you'll consider the critical importance, now more than ever, your vote to raise the minimum wage could have.

I'm moved to be here by what I've learned first-hand about the negative impact of economic insecurity on mental health from those I've been privileged to work with during my 43 years as a NH Licensed Clinical Mental Health provider. During these years, I've worked at the Community Mental Health Center, Emergency and Adult Services, Concord Hospital Emergency Room, and in group and private practice.

This legislature along with the governor have expressed a commitment to addressing solutions to the crisis in mental health care availability, as well to the uplifting of healthy families in our state. The present minimum wage, as you know, cannot support a family. What may not be as obvious as some of the other significant consequences, is the impact poverty and economic hardship have on undermining the mental health of our state's families and children.

I have seen how the conditions of sub-livable wages creates home environments that bring parents into a chronic state of anxiety, stress, depression and despair. These day-to-day economic conditions for any of us could lead to a decreased ability to cope, and to the increased presence of anger, parental absence, and the inability to regulate otherwise stable emotions. The chronic pressure and anxiety about daily economic survival become the conditions for children to go without the nurturing environment with their parents they need to grow into confident, emotionally healthy, well functioning citizens.

I am sure there are many people in this room, including some of you, that were raised in homes where chronic economic hardship made the otherwise naturally loving relationships of a secure home impossible.

Each of your votes on this legislation will hold you personally responsible for the ever escalating consequences, short and long term, of the mental health and well-being, or lack of it, in our communities. Your vote on SB 144 will either support the conditions for good emotional development and mental health, or it will keep families in bondage to the natural human consequences of a substandard, perpetually insecure economic reality.

The impact of asking a whole population of hard working New Hampshire citizens to accept our minimum wage is to communicate that we simply do not value their dignity, their lives or the lives of their families. The emotional consequences may include self-devaluation, depression, despair, domestic violence, parental neglect, substance abuse, and sometimes, tragically, suicide.

To be treated as disposable while fighting for economic survival, as we know, can also lead to anti-social and often more lucrative criminal activity. How can anyone care for a culture that so flagrantly does not care for them?

I have heard arguments that raising the minimum wage would have untoward consequences for businesses in our state, but I would like to have confidence that we can raise the minimum wage and then, with your collective creativity and resourcefulness, find other solutions for supporting businesses without laying the weight of a business-healthy state on the backs of our lowest paid, hard working citizens.

My colleagues and I can't help people become stronger when the ground holding them up is continually falling out beneath them. Mental health providers are attempting to address individual after individual, marriage after marriage, family after family while sending them back into living situations that are chronically creating despair.

I've come in good faith to ask you to consider the well-being of families, children and our communities by raising this substandard wage to a livable wage. To continue to not do so will simply grow the very destructive cultural trends we all want so deeply to heal.

I have included in your copies a l list of other NH Mental Health Providers that have endorsed this testimony. Please vote Yes on SB 144.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you.
Linda-Ruth Berger, MACP, LCMHC
18 North Main Street, Suite 300 Concord, NH 03301 603 224 0600

For more information see CDC on Adverse Emotional Experiences
https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/fastfact.html (Note: Economic Security is listed as number 1 Prevention for ACE incidents and consequences for children)

Endorsers of This Testimony:
Dr. Jane McClung, PhD. Psychologist Concord NH
Dr. Joanne Linden, Psychologist, PhD. Concord, NH
Dr. Patricia Gianotti, Psychologist, PsyD. North Hampton, NH
Dr. Linda Zollo, Psychologist, PhD. Concord, NH
Dr. Gerri King, Social Psychologist and Organizational Consultant, Concord, NH.
Helen Fitzgerald, LMFT, Marriage and Family Therapist, Concord, NH.
Dr. Pamela Goss-Powers, PhD. First Responders Thrive, Psychologist, Concord, NH
Liane MaLossi Kerbyson LCMHC, LPCC Contoocook, NH
Dr. Janet Samuels, Psychologist Concord, NH
Dr. Sandra Yarne, Ph D. Portsmouth, NH.
Dr. Christyn Sieve, PsyD Psychologist, Portsmouth, NH

Aaron Jones

From: Gary McGath <garym@mcgath.com>
Sent: Friday, January 20, 2023 10:25 AM
To: William Gannon; Denise Ricciardi; Shannon Chandley; Donna Soucy; Daniel Innis; Aaron Jones
Subject: Opposing SB 144 (minimum wage)

I am writing in opposition to SB 144, which would increase the minimum wage in New Hampshire.

While many people think such bills give people a "raise," what they actually do is make it illegal to employ people whose work is worth less than a specified value. This has several effects:

1. Putting people with limited skills out of work.

2. Reducing the hours of those who are close to the margin.

3. Encouraging the accelerated use of automation to replace employees.

Please vote with your brains, not your "hearts." Thank you.

Gary McGath
3 West Pine St. #20
Plaistow, NH 03865

--
Gary McGath garym@mcgath.com

Aaron Jones

From: l.zollo@outlook.com
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 8:08 AM
To: William Gannon; Denise Ricciardi; Shannon.Chandley@leg.state.nh.us; Donna Soucy; Daniel.Innis@leg.state.nh.us; Aaron Jones
Subject: Support for raising the state minimum wage

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Dear Senate Commerce Committee Members:
I am writing to testify in favor of raising the minimum wage in New Hampshire to at least $15. I hope that my testimony will help you to see the long-term negative impact of individuals and families living in untenable conditions of poverty despite their status as working citizens. I am a Clinical Psychologist with over 30 years in the field. I have worked in various settings in the state including Riverbend mental health center, Manchester Veterans Administration Medical Center, an inpatient private psych hospital and private practice with a wide range of individuals with varying difficulties. Over the years I have grown in my perspective of the devastating emotional and physical impact of chronic stress as well as the therapeutic benefit of work for all.
In the vote for an increased minimum wage New Hampshire has the challenge of relieving some of the stress that impacts working families and laying the stage for improved future functioning and health for its citizens. At this time when many are lamenting the absence of "good help" (as the expression goes) it would be tremendously short-sighted to miss the opportunity to demonstrate good faith toward the individuals who we have clearly seen in the pandemic are the backbone of our economy and our society. Financially it would be tremendously unwise to vote against the increase of the minimum wage to a level that will enable families and working people to thrive, not just merely survive. However, I believe it is also short-sighted to think that the decision to maintain a subsistence level minimum wage that requires individuals and parents to work two or more jobs to merely pay the rent in this state does not have long lasting implications for the future health of working people and their families. The stress of poverty has been associated with vulnerability to domestic violence, substance abuse, depression, and criminal activity.
A well-respected research investigation was conducted by the CDC and Kaiser Permanente in 1995-1997 of the relationship between Adverse Childhood Experiences and later life health and wellbeing. This "ACE" study found that the more adverse childhood events to which a child was exposed, for example, exposure to domestic violence, emotional neglect, a mentally ill, depressed, or addicted person in the home, the more likely they would have health problems in adulthood. Since then, researchers have found similar associations of poverty and systemic oppression to chronic physical disease due to the impact of chronic stress on the brain and the body.
I encourage you to carefully consider the awesome responsibility you have accepted in your role in public service. I believe that your responsibility is not just to this generation but to future generations that will follow. By voting for an increase in the minimum wage in New Hampshire you will be demonstrating your commitment to maintaining a just society committed to providing fair compensation to those willing to work. Being able to support oneself and one's family through full time employment contributes to one's dignity and self-respect. That can only benefit the quality of life for all New Hampshire residents.
Thank you for your consideration of this testimony in your deliberations about moving the State of New Hampshire forward.
Linda Zollo, PhD, Clinical Psychologist
18 N. Main Street, Suite 304 Concord NH 03301
603-731-9937
February 6, 2023

Aaron Jones

From: Claudia Istel <cistel79@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 12:32 AM
To: William Gannon; Denise Ricciardi; Shannon Chandley; Donna Soucy; Daniel Innis; Aaron Jones
Subject: Testimony in support of SB 144

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

I hope to be able to offer this testimony in person at your hearing tomorrow. In case I cannot get there, and because it may be easier for you to have an electronic copy, I am including it below.
Thank you.

Testimony in Support of SB 144

Good morning, Chair Gannon and members of the Senate Commerce Committee. Thank you for listening to my testimony in support of SB 144. I am Claudia Istel from Acworth and a member of Raise Up New Hampshire.

In my experience talking with voters about their concerns, the economy is often mentioned.

In discussing the minimum wage, there is often disbelief and dismay that NH doesn't have a minimum wage and relies on the federal minimum wage of $7.25, which has not been raised since 2009, over thirteen years ago and during which time inflation has increased by more than 24%.

With labor market pressures, these voters are sure that no one still earns the minimum wage. However, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 9000 NH workers earn $7.25/hour or less (at subminimum wage jobs, but not including tipped work). This is only 2.3% of the NH workforce, but for these workers, market forces are not working. (1)

Many workers earn more than the minimum wage, but still 150,000 NH workers earn less than $15/hour. That's about 20% of the work force or 1 in 5 workers. These workers are not earning enough to cover basic needs of housing, food, clothing, medical care, and transportation. They are eligible for public assistance programs. These safety net programs were designed to help people in temporary and unusually unfortunate circumstances, not as a way to make ends meet every month. These programs are paid for by

taxpayers, like the workers who rely on them and like all of us here. Why are we subsidizing businesses so they can increase their profits? (2)

Those I spoke with found these facts concerning, but countered with "If wages go up, prices will rise even more, hurting everyone." Not so, according to the Economic Policy Institute. They estimate that raising the federal minimum wage to $15/hour would lift wages for 32 million workers across the country at a cost of about $108 billion dollars – a huge sum, but only about 0.7% of the $16 trillion that US consumers spend annually. So even if the raise was made in one year, and most bills, including SB 144, propose incremental increases, the effect on prices would be less than 1%. (3)

Another common comment was that workers who want to improve their income can pursue education and training for better paying jobs. Many workers have done this, resulting in worker shortages in essential jobs from highway workers to retail sales clerks to nursing assistants, from school bus drivers to substitute teachers and educational paraprofessionals. Many find the stress and lack of support in these essential occupations, combined with low pay, to be demoralizing, stressful, and a toll on one's physical and mental health as they constantly worry about making ends meet. The National Employment Law Project and Economic Policy Institute found that wages were below the cost of living in NH for the following occupations: wait staff, fast food cooks and workers, dishwashers, cashiers, substitute teachers, restaurant hostesses, laundry workers, childcare workers, retail salespersons, housekeeping cleaners, home health care aides, nursing assistants, teaching assistants, and paramedics. We need these people for our society to function. If we deem that they are essential, shouldn't we respect them with a decent wage?

Inflation is a big concern now. We all can talk about how increases in the price of food, electricity, fuel, and other items have wreaked havoc with our budgets. The people who are most affected are low wage workers who spend all their income on essential items like food, housing, and energy. They could barely make ends in 2020 and used pandemic relief checks to cover basic expenses. Now they are stretched more, stressed, and suffering. They are relying even more on food pantries, church relief funds, and public assistance programs. As they spend almost all their income in the local stores and businesses, they build and strengthen our state economy. They are also the ones most affected by higher prices because so many of them work in retail and service jobs. Consumers will first cut back on discretionary spending such as eating out and buying extras, and low wage workers in service and retail will be among the first to see their hours and jobs cut.

I would recommend that you amend this bill to include a cost of living adjustment each year. Even the significant increases included in this bill will still leave workers earning less than a living wage. The MIT Living Wage Calculator shows that a living wage for a single person in NH is over $17/hour, and more if one is supporting a dependent. Annual cost of living adjustments would prevent workers from falling further behind and would allow their wages to maintain their buying power.

If we believe that everyone should be able to stand on their own two feet, then we should support paying workers enough so that they can do that. I thank the sponsors of SB 144 for recognizing this. This bill is a conservative move in the right direction. Please support SB 144 to reinstate the minimum wage in NH and raise it to $15/hour by 2024.

Thank you,

(1) Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Characteristics of Minimum Wage Workers, 2021* (table 3), April 2022, https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/minimum-wage/2021/home.htm

(2) Economic Policy Institute, Demographic Characteristics of Workers Who Would Benefit if the Federal Minimum Wage were Raised to $15 by 2025, https://files.epi.org/pdf/221010.pdf

(3) Sebastian Martinez Hickey and David Cooper, *Rising Minimum Wages in 20 States and Localities Help Protect Workers and Families Against Higher Prices*, Economic Policy Institute, July 11, 2022, https://www.epi.org/blog/rising-minimum-wages-in-20-states-and-localities-help-protect-workers-and-families-against-higher-prices/.

Claudia Istel

Acworth, NH 03601

cistel79@gmail.com

February 7, 2023

ECONOMIC JUSTICE MISSION GROUP OF THE NH CONFERENCE – UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

February 7, 2023

RE: SB 144

TO: Members of the NH Senate Commerce Committee

FROM: Rev. Dr. Gail Kinney, on behalf of the NH Conference, United Church of Christ

Distinguished Senators, I submit this communication on behalf of the New Hampshire Conference United Church of Christ. The UCC (we are also known as the Congregationalists) is the largest Protestant denomination in New Hampshire.

In 2014, the NH Conference UCC, aghast that the New Hampshire Legislature had wiped the minimum wage statute off the books several years earlier and equally concerned and aware that the $7.25 federal minimum wage was a poverty-level wage, passed a comprehensive resolution declaring that "jobs should lift workers out of poverty, not keep them there." This faith denomination stated unequivocally that, as a matter of both public policy and basic morality, the State of NH must "reinstate the state minimum wage and set it an adequate level …so that no full-time worker is relegated to a life of poverty despite his or her work effort and ethic."

Fast forward more than eight years after this denominational policy statement, and we find the State of New Hampshire clinging to the same shameful notion that dedicated full-time work should not necessarily enable an individual to thrive in our state – and that NH workers who make some of the lowest wages and yet do some of the most essential work – in day care centers and nursing homes and food and sanitation services and more – are neither valued nor compensated in a way that will allow them to live safely and securely in our state.

Whether we are talking about the workers who still make $7.25 per hour or $8 or $9 or $10 or $11, etc., every Senator surely understands that this is not enough to keep a safe roof over one's head in NH nor to clothe or feed oneself or one's family or to have the means to get to and from work. And if this reality is well known, NOW is the time to finally fix this policy abomination.

There is another key reason to finally address NH wage policy is a responsible way. NH needs workers! NH needs dedicated workers in numerous sectors of our economy – and NH especially and desperately needs workers in the jobs that are now the lowest paid in the state. And yet, our minimum wage stance serves as a worker repellant. It declares, "Workers are not valued in NH;" "Cross the border to any contiguous state and make significantly more if you are at the bottom rungs of the wage ladder."

So, even as certain lobbyists cling to well-worn and outdated arguments for devaluing work, YOU, as Senators, must keep the entire economic fabric of the state in the forefront of your policy-making. The minimum wage is a "wage floor." So, now is the time – finally – for the NH Legislator to say to every worker and potential worker, "*As a matter of public policy in New Hampshire, there is a floor below which we will not go when it comes to valuing work and workers in our state. We want you as a worker in NH, and we want you to stay in our state – and our minimum wage policy underscores our determination to make NH a good place to live, stay and work.*"

140 Sheep Davis Road ▪ Pembroke, New Hampshire 03275-3711
economicjustice.nhcucc@gmail.com

CITY OF MANCHESTER

Joyce Craig
Mayor

February 7

Chairman Bill Gannon
Senate Commerce Committee
NH State House - Room 100
107 N Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

RE: SB 144

Dear Chairman Gannon and Members of the Senate Commerce Committee,

Before you today, you have a piece of legislation critical to working families and individuals across our state - SB 144, providing increases in the minimum hourly rate. I urge the Senate Commerce Committee to look favorably on this legislation and recommend an "Ought to Pass" motion to the full Senate.

New Hampshire's current minimum wage is tied to the federal rate, which has been $7.25/hour for over a decade. This is not a livable wage for individuals or families in the Granite State. Looking at surrounding New England states, New Hampshire's wages have not kept up as the only state in the region with a minimum wage under $13/hour. Voting for SB 144 is an important investment to create a New Hampshire where everyone can stay, work, play, and raise a family, helping individuals and families across income levels lead dignified lives.

The City of Manchester and the Manchester School District have both implemented $15 minimum wages for all full-time City and District employees, and it is time that the State of New Hampshire follow suit.

Sincerely,

Joyce Craig

Joyce Craig
Mayor of Manchester, New Hampshire

One City Hall Plaza • Manchester, New Hampshire 03101 • (603) 624-6500
Email: mayor@manchesternh.gov • Website: www.manchesternh.gov

Aaron Jones

From: lsmacgregor <lsmacgregor@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 20, 2023 3:00 PM
To: William Gannon; Denise Ricciardi; Shannon Chandley; Donna Soucy; Daniel Innis; Aaron Jones
Subject: SB 144, from a constituent

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Honorable members of the Commerce Committee.

I support this bill which raises the minimum wage, as it is appropriate for the economic considerations of our time, and will be a move toward less homelessness and hunger for my fellow New Hampshirites. Please support SB 144.

Thank you.

Leslie S. MacGregor
Grantham, NH

Voting Sheets

Senate Commerce Committee
EXECUTIVE SESSION RECORD
2023-2024 Session

Bill # SB 144

Hearing date: 2/7/23

Executive Session date: 2/14/23

Motion of: OTP **Vote:** 2-3

Committee Member	Made by	Second	Yes	No
Sen. Gannon, Chair				✓
Sen. Ricciardi, V-Chair				✓
Sen. Innis				✓
Sen. Soucy	✓		✓	
Sen. Chandley		✓	✓	

Motion of: ITL **Vote:** 3-2

Committee Member	Made by	Second	Yes	No
Sen. Gannon, Chair		✓	✓	
Sen. Ricciardi, V-Chair		✓	✓	
Sen. Innis	✓		✓	
Sen. Soucy				✓
Sen. Chandley				✓

Motion of: _____ **Vote:** _____

Committee Member	Made by	Second	Yes	No
Sen. Gannon, Chair				
Sen. Ricciardi, V-Chair				
Sen. Innis				
Sen. Soucy				
Sen. Chandley				

Reported out by: Sen. Innis

Notes: _____

Committee Report

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

SENATE

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, February 14, 2023

THE COMMITTEE ON Commerce

to which was referred **SB 144**

AN ACT relative to the state minimum hourly rate.

Having considered the same, the committee recommends that the Bill

IS INEXPEDIENT TO LEGISLATE

BY A VOTE OF: 3-2

Senator Daniel Innis
For the Committee

Aaron Jones 271-2609

COMMERCE

SB 144, relative to the state minimum hourly rate.
Inexpedient to Legislate, Vote 3-2.
Senator Daniel Innis for the committee.

General Court of New Hampshire - Bill Status System

Docket of SB144

Docket Abbreviations

Bill Title: relative to the state minimum hourly rate.

Official Docket of **SB144.**:

Date	Body	Description
1/19/2023	S	**Introduced** 01/19/2023 and Referred to Commerce; **SJ 5**
1/31/2023	S	**Hearing:** 02/07/2023, Room 100, SH, 10:00 am; **SC 9**
2/14/2023	S	Committee Report: Inexpedient to Legislate, 02/22/2023; **SC 11**
2/22/2023	S	Inexpedient to Legislate, **RC** 14Y-10N, MA === BILL KILLED ===; 02/22/2023; **SJ 8**

NH House	NH Senate

Other Referrals

Senate Inventory Checklist for Archives

Bill Number: SB 144 **Senate Committee:** Commerce

Please include all documents in the order listed below and indicate the documents which have been included with an "X" beside

X Final docket found on Bill Status

Bill Hearing Documents: {Legislative Aides}

X Bill version as it came to the committee
X All Calendar Notices
X Hearing Sign-up sheet(s)
X Prepared testimony, presentations, & other submissions handed in at the public hearing
X Hearing Report
N/A Revised/Amended Fiscal Notes provided by the Senate Clerk's Office

Committee Action Documents: {Legislative Aides}

All amendments considered in committee (including those not adopted):

N/A amendment # _____ ___ - amendment # _____
___ - amendment # _____ ___ - amendment # _____

X Executive Session Sheet
X Committee Report

Floor Action Documents: {Clerk's Office}

All floor amendments considered by the body during session (only if they are offered to the senate):

___ - amendment # _____ ___ - amendment # _____
___ - amendment # _____ ___ - amendment # _____

Post Floor Action: (if applicable) {Clerk's Office}

___ Committee of Conference Report (if signed off by all members. Include any new language proposed by the committee of conference):
___ Enrolled Bill Amendment(s)
___ Governor's Veto Message

All available versions of the bill: {Clerk's Office}

___ as amended by the senate ___ as amended by the house
___ final version

Completed Committee Report File Delivered to the Senate Clerk's Office By:

Aaron James
Committee Aide

8/10/23
Date

Senate Clerk's Office AK