

BUSINESS for a FAIR MINIMUM WAGE

For Immediate Release

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Business Owners Speak Out in Support of New \$15 Federal Minimum Wage Bill

Missouri restaurant owner joins House and Senate leadership at Capitol Hill press conference today to speak in support of the Raise the Wage Act; business owners across the country show their support for raising the federal minimum wage to \$15 by 2024

Washington, D.C., Jan. 16, 2019 — Missouri business owner Howard Hanna, owner of The Rieger and Ca Va restaurants in Kansas City, Mo., will join lawmakers at a 2 PM press conference in the Rayburn Room of the U.S. Capitol to voice his support for the Raise the Wage Act, a bill being introduced today that would raise the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$15 by 2024. Hanna will join lawmakers, including Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, Chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor Bobby Scott and others, to discuss why a \$15 federal minimum wage makes sense from a business and economic perspective.

Business leaders across the country support raising the federal minimum wage because it will boost businesses and the economy as workers have more money to spend. Businesses will benefit from lower employee turnover and increased productivity and customer satisfaction, and say the gradual phase-in gives businesses time to plan for increased wages.

“I strongly support the Raise the Wage Act, including gradually phasing out the tipped minimum wage to assure all workers get reliable living wages whatever their position,” said **Howard Hanna, owner of The Rieger and Ca Va restaurants in Kansas City, Mo.** “The minimum wage hasn’t kept up with the cost of living, and paying higher wages has real bottom-line benefits. Paying above the current minimum wage and treating our employees well has been a recipe for success. We’re looking forward to opening two new restaurants next year, while our existing businesses continue to grow. The low-wage, high-turnover business model makes no sense. Our employees look out for our best interests because they know that we are looking out for theirs.”

Holly Sklar, CEO of Business for a Fair Minimum Wage, said, “Raising the minimum wage to \$15 by 2024 will be good for business, good for customers and good for our economy. Workers are also customers – and increased pay means increased consumer buying power. Raising the minimum wage also pays off in lower employee turnover, reduced hiring and training costs, and better productivity and customer service. Employees often make the difference between repeat customers and lost customers. It’s time to boost the economy from the bottom up and assure a decent minimum wage wherever people live and do business.”

Margot Dorfman, CEO of the U.S. Women’s Chamber of Commerce, said, “Raising the minimum wage to \$15 by 2024 will be a win-win for businesses and workers. It will help small businesses like my members by putting more money in the pockets of customers – boosting consumer demand and job creation. Businesses that pay low wages may save on immediate payroll, but they experience the significant expense of higher turnover, low morale and a less productive workforce. Raising the minimum wage is a vital investment in businesses and our economy.”

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Business for a Fair Minimum Wage members across the nation spoke out today in support. The following business leaders and others are also available for media interviews:

Michael Lastoria, CEO of &pizza, with locations in Virginia, D.C., Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York and Florida: “When you take care of your people, they take care of your customers, and your business thrives. As a result of fair wages, we’ve seen higher employee productivity and retention. Our employee morale has skyrocketed and, with it, our customer experience and our bottom line. Our employees have become our loudest brand ambassadors.”

Angela O’Byrne, President of Perez APC, New Orleans, and Louisiana's 2016 Small Business Person of the Year: “A stagnant minimum wage that mires full-time workers in poverty makes absolutely no sense from a business perspective. Paying fair wages boosts consumer demand, which drives job creation. Gradually increasing the federal minimum wage to \$15 will create an economic ripple effect benefitting businesses large and small.”

Sue Melvin, Vice President of Human Resources, Stonyfield: “At Stonyfield we know that our employees and our business thrive because we pay fair wages. But it’s time to raise the bar, so that everyone who works hard is actually able to make ends meet. That’s just not possible at \$7.25 an hour. We are strong supporters of raising the federal minimum wage to \$15 by 2024.”

Mike Draper, Owner of Raygun LLC with locations in Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, Iowa City and Kansas City, MO. “Raising the minimum wage is important for fair competition and a thriving economy. My taxes shouldn’t be diverted into corporate welfare going to subsidize my competitors whose low wages drive their employees to public assistance. An economy thrives when working people can make ends meet and have money to spend at local businesses.”

Rebecca Hamilton, Family Owner and Vice President of W.S. Badger Company, a 2017 Forbes Small Giant, Gilsum, NH: “\$7.25 per hour is not an adequate wage in New Hampshire, or anywhere we sell Badger Balm and our other products across the U.S. Paying a living wage is a core part of our culture and has helped us hire and retain excellent staff even in a time when other businesses have struggled. Fair pay and other family-friendly practices help build successful businesses and healthy communities.”

Michael O’Connor, Owner of La Barberia, Philadelphia, PA: “We know that by paying fair wages, our employees are happier and they stick around, providing the great service that keeps our customers coming back and recommending us to others. When the minimum wage goes up, businesses will see costly turnover go down.”

Kathy Eckhouse, Owner, La Quercia, Norwalk, IA: “The current \$7.25 minimum wage is a drag on the nation’s customer base and economy. Workers in one business are the consumers for other businesses. Raising the minimum wage is important to a healthy food system that sustains everyone from producers and sellers to customers and the communities we live in.”

Additional members of Business for a Fair Minimum Wage from across the country who are supportive of raising the federal minimum wage are available for comment and/or broadcast bookings. To schedule an interview, contact Erin Musgrave at erin@emcstrategies.com or (530) 864-7014.

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Business for a Fair Minimum Wage is a national network of business owners and executives that believe a fair minimum wage makes good business sense. Follow us on Twitter at [@MinimumWageBiz](https://twitter.com/MinimumWageBiz).