

African American Community Session Summary

February 15, 2017

General comments:

- At what level does an increase become impactful for people?
- We should be clear that nowhere in the 30 cities/counties has there been a decrease in employment. In Seattle, business is booming, and now they have the first wave of workers making \$15. Businesses have already adjusted to an increased minimum wage, and it's likely with a 6 year phase in, that we'll have positive impacts as well.
- To clarify from the Roy Wilkins study, it's likely that there would be slower hiring, but it's probably due to workers staying in their jobs longer because they are making more money.
- Small business owners are concerned that the wage increase would put them out of business, but they also understand that if people are making more money they'll have more money to spend at their businesses. That's why 15 Now has proposed raising the wage slowly by 2020 and would be implemented first with big businesses. There is also an issue in my neighborhood with rents going up due to the light rail line and if we don't make more money we will have to move.
- Our organization is really pushing for an increased wage from a public health perspective. There are so many correlations between increased wages and positive health outcomes. Socio-economic status is the most important predictive measure in determining health outcomes and wages/income are one of the biggest determinants. There are links between race, wages, and public health. One of our nurse's was working with a father and son who both had diabetes and they had to share insulin because the son didn't have health insurance and couldn't afford his own. People aren't able to afford to pay for prescriptions that are needed to treat chronic diseases.
- Do we really want to build a city that is based on 30-40% of people making less than what it takes to live? Isn't the end product of that destabilizing for the city/region? I worked for Delta Airlines, that year Delta made \$4 Billion in profit and Minnesota received 25% of that profit. Profits are being taken out of cities and put into offshore accounts. Part of the reason why there should be a faster ramp up for big businesses is so that you cut off that extractive process and keep more money in the city.

- How do we share and/or spread needs in our city? Aren't low-wage workers already shouldering enough of the responsibility in the public health arena?
- Health outcomes and educational outcomes all relate to the opportunity gap and we need solutions to fill that. If we pay a living wage, we'll all benefit in the long run.
- What about contractors who come in to the city to provide services? For example, lawn services, would they need to pay a worker different wages for when they work inside/outside the city? What about businesses that are based in the city? Maybe the city shouldn't allow outside companies to come into the city and compete with Minneapolis-based businesses? What about businesses that operate on the periphery of the city? Consider restrictions for businesses not based in Minneapolis, but providing services inside the city.
- What we've seen in other states is that the state often follows when a city passes an ordinance.
- \$15 is an important number an earlier ballot measure received enough signatures from community members, but was blocked by City Council, which is why we are where we are now.
- Let's be real that people are living and working in poverty at \$9.50/hr.
- My mom makes \$11.50 an hour and doesn't qualify for food stamps, but needs benefits.
- I'm excited at the possibility that I can live in a city that matches my values because that won't happen at the federal or state level.
- The Roy Wilkins study showed that workers are making poverty wages that have a college education. It really grabs you at a statistical level that its working class families that are most impacted by this issue. Businesses are really removed from the crisis of families living in poverty and don't understand the struggles.
- A blue collar worker can't be a salaried employee in salary MN.