

Native American Community Session Summary

February 7, 2017

General comments:

- Is this action expected to raise the min from \$9.50 to \$15 all at once?
- The proposal that was on the table last summer would have phased in a wage increase over 3-5 years.
- As a large employer, we're supportive of an increase. We know what it costs to live, and think people shouldn't suffer.
- As representative for a union, we need to ensure that existing collective bargaining agreements are honored. Tipped workers should also be exempt.
- Tipped wages are taxable income to employees. They should be counted as "wages" for employers, as well.
- Training wages (or a youth wage) should also be incorporated into a proposal.
- Most people being served are going to be those in low-paying jobs in retail and food service. I support the idea of a training or youth wage so that those "first jobs" don't go away.
- Might need to consider separating youth and training wages.
- If a youth wage exemption is considered, identifying youth should be consistent with County's age limit at 21.
- Minimum wage increase is meant for those who are at the bottom of the wage scale and who most need social supports to make housing and other basic needs affordable. Isn't that the intention of having (and raising) a minimum wage?
- As a policymaker, the intention of an increased minimum wage is to ensure that people can keep up with their own expenses.
- I make \$15.28/hr which equals \$32,000 a year. That works out to \$348 for food, \$740 for housing, and other expenses. If you want to live a fiscally responsible life, you should be earning at least \$65,000.

- United States has 64% of wealth in the world, and in the US the top 1% have most of that wealth. Who's benefitting?
- We need to be cautious about benefit cliffs. We have people working and eligible for SNAP and other benefits because their housing costs are so high, and their wages are insufficient.
- Don't let a policy get in the way of taking advantage of needed benefits.
- There needs to be a holistic approach where many segments of our City are working cooperatively to support our lowest-wage workers.
- Seattle's restaurant worker population used to average 22 workers per restaurant and now the industry now has more like 18 per restaurant due to their wage increase.
- Tipped employees are the ones who benefit most from a wage increase, is that the intention?
- What about the inflation of the cost of living? How do we account for that?
- I'm concerned as well about addressing these issues statewide – so we're clear about our mutual dependency; and, so that it would be less heated politically.
- A statewide policy would be better, of course, but Minneapolis City Council has the ability to make this change now. They should.
- There is a direct link between poverty and health effects so we need to raise the minimum wage to ensure people can meet their basic needs.