

## Central Library – Minneapolis Youth Congress

March 16, 2017

### **General comments:**

- Only a few in the room work. Of those who work, most stated they contribute to their household income.
- Most of the youth who worked earned an average of \$8.00/hour.

### **The conversation opened with questions of concern upon learning this was Minneapolis only:**

- Companies would “dodge out” and move their corporate headquarters/businesses out of Minneapolis.
- The job market would be oversaturated because no one would want to work in other cities.
- There will be job loss.
- I’m worried. This means undocumented workers would be even more exploited.
- On the positive side, a Minneapolis only wage may increase pressure on other cities to raise wages due to employee recruitment and retention issues.
- This will work better if it’s statewide.

### **Other comments and concerns:**

- I’m worried that companies will turn to automation.
- I’m concerned that tips will go away and we need our tips.
- If wages go up, the prices of goods will increase and there will be no benefit (still in same situation).
- Seems like prices will always go up, but wages don’t keep up.

- Jobs will be harder to get for us because other people in neighboring cities will come to Minneapolis for the \$15 and we'll get squeezed out.

**The conversation also brought several suggestions for solutions:**

- The suggested wage increase isn't enough to lift people out of poverty. More needs to be done.
- A universal based income should be considered – is there a way to provide subsidy to those in need?
- The City should provide incentives for businesses to increase wages – provide subsidy or tax break or other.
- This needs to be a holistic approach. If it's done with other solutions for families in place the payoff is less reliance on social services. It could be a “budgetary tradeoff.”
- The City should consider a rent control or rent cap.

**The participants were asked specifically how they felt about a “youth wage” or training wage, etc.**

- There should be a “cut out” or lower wage but not a significant one. For example, if the minimum wage is \$15 a youth wage might be \$14.
- Wages should be based on experience with periodic raises.
- A youth wage should be age based. Conversely, a youth wage should not be age based.
- There are ways to ensure that youth who contribute to the household get the wage increase (\$15 was used). A suggestion was to somehow report household income to employer.
- There was a concern that reporting household income would cause more paperwork for everyone.
- Another suggestion was that if reporting income, it should come after the hire so there is no discrimination.

- There should be a way to ensure those who need income support get it and those who don't would get the lower wage. The example offered was a single mom is needing it more than a youth who has support at home.
- There was still concern expressed that raising the minimum wage won't lift people out of poverty.