

***Testimony for Senate Labor & Industry  
Hearing on Minimum Wage  
May 5, 2015***

***Charles Harford  
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**Good Afternoon Senate Labor & Industry Committee Members. My name is Charles Harford. I am a deli clerk at Mutzabaugh's Market in Duncannon, Pa.**

**Mutzabaugh's Market is a medium sized family owned independent grocery store that has served the Duncannon area for generations.**

**I'm a part time minimum wage based employee. My responsibilities range from being a fry cook, customer service, cashier, cleaning, changing oil, mopping floors and everything else that would be expected in a food service business. I'm required to follow strict food safety guidelines that require training, commitment and discipline for the protection of our customers. I'm constantly multitasking and expected to perform my duties with a sense of urgency. I say this humbly, Mutzabaugh's Market and many businesses that have positions paying minimum wage would cease to exist without the people to fill them. I am one of those people.**

**My position is considered part time with no additional benefits other than the standard wage. The hours from week to week vary in consistency, schedule and length. I am encouraged to be available to come into work at a moment's notice if there is a call off or a need for more help. Working weekends and late at night are to be expected. Holiday hours are another requirement employees are expected to be available for to work in most departments.**

**I've seen first hand and have struggled with it personally how low wages affect morale, work ethic and the image a person has about themselves. Not only themselves, but also how we are seen by society. Minimum wage positions are seen as low skill and unimportant, yet store policy and government standards require a person who is fairly intelligent, driven, organized and disciplined. The pay is so low where I work that employees aren't expected to stay long and the ones who do bear the burden of consistently dealing with new trainees. In six months I have personally seen at least forty people come and go in the deli area alone. I stopped counting at that point.**

**My starting wage was \$7.40 per hour and I received a ten cent raise after ninety days. I can expect as much as twenty cents more per hour after one year. I average sixty hours every two weeks. That's approximately \$6.50 per hour after taxes or \$45.00 per a seven hour shift. A two week check gives me approximately four hundred dollars for expenses and bills. My bills include 53.00 for car insurance, 25.00 for insurance premiums, 200.00 for rent, money for food and other necessities. There are also taxes, licenses and registration fees. At the end of the week I have little option to save. It's never even considered most weeks.**

**I am very fortunate that I live with my mother; however, I know and worry that a major repair to my car or an illness could be devastating to me.**

**Raising the minimum wage would not only help ease some of the personal challenges I've mentioned, but it would also benefit businesses and customers with more committed and motivated people. Myself and everyone else making minimum wage would have a better quality of life, be more secure in facing unexpected expenses, and not to mention contributing more towards growth in the economy. Morale and motivation would undoubtedly increase where I work, benefiting not only the store with a better workforce and far less turnover, but the customer's experience would also improve.**

**Profits, stock value and customer prices aren't the only important issues to consider in whether or not to raise the minimum wage. The communities these businesses operate in and the people who live and work in them are too. There's a theory that if you cut the taxes of the wealthiest individuals in the country it'll have a trickle down effect increasing growth. That may be true, but if you raise the minimum wage for the lowest earners in our society it's guaranteed to have an almost sudden effect in growth by increasing the ability and choice to contribute to the economy by spending for so many hard working people.**

**In actuality, Raising The Minimum Wage is a win win situation for everyone.**

**Sincerely,  
Charles Harford**