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Subject: Minimum Wage Testimony

City of Milwaukee Minimum Wage Hearing--February 17, 2005

Finance & Personnel Committee --Don Richards

<>
City Ordinance. 041311, sub. 1

Among many reasons for increasing Wisconsin's minimum wage for the first time since 1997, I speak to the integrity of the Common Council itself, of which I was a member for all those years. Wisconsin legislator's annual pay rose 16.2% compared to a 12.7% rate of inflation for that period. During the same period Milwaukee alder's pay rose 25.4%.

That was on my watch, I voted for it, I accepted it, and I think it was justified. A living wage freed me and all of us concentrate on the work of the city, and not on our own survival. An increase in the statewide minimum wage will be a small step toward guaranteeing others have the same freedom we enjoy.

Passing this ordinance will send a message to the Legislature that you are watching on behalf of your constituents. State legislators have voted for the same freedoms we have. Not to increase the minimum wage will call into question the integrity of a body which votes privilege for itself and hardship for others.

It would be like sending troops into a battle we are unwilling to experience ourselves. Send the message, preserve your integrity.

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