



Minimum wage helps the economy (Commentary)

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We have your best interests at heart. No; really! We are going to protect you and your workplace (and us) from an insidious, destructive government-mandated minimum wage!

Who are we? We were the benevolent mine owners protecting you from trouble-making labor thugs. You can breathe easy. Oh! Sorry about that coal dust in your lungs.

We were the auto tycoons protecting you from dangerous radicals daring to interrupt our assembly lines, distracting you from the noble work we provide, with visions of sugar plums such as benefits, worker safety and (gasp!) a government-enacted minimum wage.

Who are we now?

We still have your best interests at heart. You see, there are those misguided goody-goodies who actually think that raising the minimum wage will in fact raise your minimal wages. But you should be grateful to us, your benevolent patrons who know better.

Raising your minimum wage will take money from us ... oops ... I mean from you. (Heh, heh.) You see, we noble employers of the lowly have to protect you.

You can happily work for us doing wonderful menial tasks; we can make sure you continue to be grateful to our benevolence, as long as you want to enjoy the blessings of the work we permit, at the wage we're willing to pay you.

Now, if you can't be deported because of President Obama's policies or self-deport as Mr Romney suggested, or especially if you are a full citizen, we'll have to use a different kind of loving explanation.

You see, black is white and up is down. Trying to guarantee you a higher salary will in fact lower your salary. Or eliminate your job altogether. Then those menial tasks no one else is willing to do for the minimal salary we choose to pay you, may disappear. Where would we ... oops ... I mean, where would you be then?

Remember, we have your best interest at heart. We are here to protect you and the workplace from union trouble and socialistic, anti-capitalist government interference.

But let's retreat from irony and deal with facts.

When it comes to reality, we know it is difficult for conservative Republicans to process truth e.g., Michelle Bachmann last week falsely claimed the President has a government employee to walk his dog and Obamacare will murder the vulnerable — political red meat for the willing know-nothings.

Nevertheless, there are myths about “job loss” and “hurting the economy” on the minimum wage that objective data can reasonably expose. Truth can trump misconceptions, for the willingly rational.

Opponents use subjective, old studies to perpetuate disproven concepts of minimum wages causing “jobs loss.” But the last two decades shows many examples of minimum wage increases.

Studies compare areas where there were such increases to neighboring areas where there weren't:

“Minimum Wage Effects Across State Borders, (2010) provides the most sophisticated study to date of the effects of increases in the minimum wage on job growth in the United States.

Counterpoint: [How minimum wage harms the economy](#)


Taking advantage of the fact that a record number of states raised their minimum wages during the 1990s and 2000s ... the study compares employment levels among every pair of neighboring U.S. counties that had differing minimum wage levels at any time between 1990 and 2006 and finds that higher minimum wage did not reduce employment.”

On teen employment, some studies compared New Jersey with increases to bordering Pennsylvania without. “... a phone survey of over 400 fast-food restaurants found no evidence that the increase in the minimum wage in New Jersey led to job loss ... in fact they found employment increased ... in New Jersey.”

A recent Fiscal Policy Institute report urged New York state legislators to act: “Nearly 1.6 million low-wage New Yorkers would see their paychecks rise ... to \$10.00 an hour in three annual increments.”

“While giving the state’s economy a timely boost during the tepid economic recovery, raising the minimum wage will also help to address the longer-term dramatic rise in income inequality plaguing the state and the failure ... to keep up with inflation or the poverty level.”

[And, as with Social Security checks, the wealthy accumulate; the poor spend to live, actually stimulating the economy!]



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"In addition to boosting the purchasing power of low-wage workers, higher wages often mean higher productivity for employers and savings in recruitment and training costs."

FPI concludes, "Raising the minimum wage is fair to workers and constitutes good business practice. Communities are stronger when hard work is rewarded, when the least advantaged workers are better able to make their own way, and when businesses profit by concentrating more on producing quality goods and services rather than by seeing who can pay their workers the least."

For the unsympathetic, listen to Abraham Lincoln: "Labor is prior to and independent of capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital, and deserves much the higher consideration."

When patronizing business-types claim that they'll nobly take care of lowly workers and the economy, press government and legislators anew; sing a refrain from Solidarity Forever! The power of many beats the power of one! Keep your high-handed business benevolence! We'll take care of ourselves.

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