



News Release

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For Immediate Release

Business should welcome an increase in Minimum Wage

The President of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour thinks that business should welcome an increase in the minimum wage. SFL President Larry Hubich feels the planned 40 cent increase is a very small reward for workers who produce profits for business owners. "These workers deserve a raise," said Hubich, "business should quit whining and start looking for ways to increase these wages even further in the months ahead."

After nearly three years the provincial minimum wage will be raised by 40 cents to \$7.05 per hour and the business class is crying blue murder (Restaurant meals increase – Bruce Johnson, Leader Post – August 31, 2005). Marilyn Braun Pollon of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business laments that "rising gasoline prices, along with electricity and natural gas rates are taking their toll on business profit margins". "Try living on minimum wage" said Hubich.

"What Braun-Pollon fails to mention is that business can pass these costs on to the public. Minimum wage earners also have to deal with rising costs and have no where to turn. A minimum wage earner who works full time (fewer and fewer have full time work) at \$7.05 per hour will earn slightly more than \$14,000 per year before taxes.

"Most of these earnings are immediately spent in our community supporting businesses Braun Pollon pretends to represent." he added.

Then Bev Robertson who is part owner of the Bushwacker and Cathedral Free House restaurants once again spouts off about the minimum wage. A mug of beer (as of August 31) costs \$4.95 at Bushwackers – after taxes this is what an hour of minimum wage work will purchase.

Hubich said "most minimum wage earners have few if any benefits other than their wages. Braun Pollon, Robertson and their ilk ignore these facts and seem devoid of any notion of social responsibility. Its always blame the poor."

"I want to know", said Hubich "where are these people when issues such as corporate theft (Enron, Conrad Black, etc, etc) arise? What do they have to say about rising gasoline/energy prices due to corporate gouging? Why are we paying the world price for oil when it's under our soil and we have refineries in our back yard? Their silence on these issues is deafening!"

"Minimum wage earners provide services and are productive members of our society. They all have to pay their bills and look after themselves and their families. They should even have the ability to go to a movie now and then. I just hope they spend their hard earned money at enterprises that value their worth."

“A business that can only survive by offering minimum wage jobs year after year doesn’t really help our communities. We need safe, healthy workplaces that provide decent wages and benefits. Instead of bashing the working poor business leaders should be addressing these issues.”

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