

Meghan Taylor
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LD 34

To whom it may concern,

Increasing the minimum wage for teachers is a critical step in addressing the challenges facing the education sector. Research has consistently shown that higher teacher salaries can lead to improved student performance, with one study indicating that a 10% pay increase could result in a 5-10% increase in student achievement (1). Moreover, raising the minimum wage for teachers can help alleviate the growing teacher shortage by making the profession more attractive to potential candidates and improving retention rates. A recent report by the National Education Association found that the national average starting teacher salary increased by 3.9% to \$44,530 in 2022-23, representing the largest increase in 14 years(2). However, despite these gains, teacher pay has failed to keep pace with inflation, and the teacher wage penalty – the difference in weekly wages between teachers and other college graduates – has reached a historic high of 23.5% in 2021 (3). By implementing a higher minimum wage for teachers, policymakers can not only enhance the quality of education but also contribute to the long-term economic and social well-being of society by investing in the professionals responsible for shaping future generations (1).

Please consider saying yes when thinking about the crucial role that teachers hold in shaping future generations when considering LD 34. Our compensation and social status do not reflect our importance. There is often a highlighted disconnect between the immense value we provide and the inadequate recognition we receive, both financially and socially.

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1)“Teacher Salaries Rarely Reflect the Importance of Their Job. Why Don’t We Pay Them Enough?” Teacher Task Force, 4 Nov. 2020, teachertaskforce.org/blog/teacher-salaries-rarely-reflect-importance-their-job-why-do-nt-we-pay-them-enough.

2)Walker, Tim. “Gains in Teacher Pay May Not Be Enough to Ease Shortages | NEA.” www.nea.org, 30 Apr. 2024, www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/gains-teacher-pay-may-not-be-enough-ease-shortages.

3)Sherratt, Ellen. RAISING the BAR on TEACHER PAY Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at AIR & the Teacher Salary Project Center on Great Teachers and Leaders the TEACHER SALARY PROJECT.