



To the Committee on Labor and Housing,

April 12, 2021

Mark Barnett
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Auburn, ME 04210

LD 1279 & 734 OUGHT TO PASS

My name is Mark Barnett. I am a resident of Auburn, Maine and the owner of a medical caregiver store called Higher Grounds. I am testifying today in support of LD 1279 and 734.

As a wage-paying business, I endorse an increase in the minimum wage in Maine. I recognize that businesses like mine pass along these higher labor costs to their customers. Given that, we should be considering this in the context of a wider look at the many burdens and costs facing our residents, but not viewing the fair compensation of working people as an obstacle to thriving as a state. The bedrock of our society is our working people. Giving them fair compensation for their labor helps lift all boats as working people enjoy more spending power and struggle less to afford basic amenities that any person should have access to. If we believe in velocity of money—a fundamental principle around which our economy is built—then that extra money in the pockets of our working people will directly contribute to their communities in increased ability to spend rather than simply building debt just to get by.

MIT¹ estimates that a living wage--the hourly rate that an **individual** in a household must earn to support his or herself and their family--according to its real-world market-based analysis in Maine is \$15 per hour for a single adult without children. For a single adult with 1 child, that number jumps to nearly \$31 per hour. For a family of two working adults and one child it's estimated at \$17 per hour. The poverty wage, below which an individual would be considered as among the working poor, for a single adult with one child is \$8.30, and for a family with one working adult and one child it's estimated near \$10.50. Estimates put the number of Mainers working for minimum wage in the tens of thousands in 2019². Viewed in this context, I don't think it's hard to see why an increase in the minimum wage makes sense for supporting the wellbeing of our fellow working Mainers in building their lives and their families

Sincerely,
Mark Barnett

1. "Living Wage Calculation for Maine", <https://livingwage.mit.edu/states/23>
2. State of Maine Department of Labor, [MDOL News and Events 9/21/20](#)