Daniel Galvin
Evanston, IL
LD 372

I am a professor of political science at Northwestern University and a Faculty Fellow at the university's Institute for Policy Research. I have published multiple peer-reviewed academic papers and an academic book that use statistical analyses to measure the incidence of minimum wage violations across the U.S. and within states.

In a widely cited double-blind peer-reviewed paper published in 2016, I found that in states that introduced "treble damages" (back wages + twice the amount of back wages owed) as a penalty for minimum wage noncompliance, there was a statistically significant decline in the incidence of minimum wage violations thereafter. Moreover, treble damages was the only type of anti-wage theft law that moved the needle.

I also found in a cross-sectional analysis that states that gave their labor standards enforcement agencies greater investigative powers and more robust legal authorities to adjudicate cases had a lower minimum wage violation rate, holding other confounding factors constant. I am currently finding the same patterns in a separately funded research project that updates and digs deeper into agency powers and practices.

The paper mentioned above is Daniel J. Galvin, "Deterring Wage Theft: Alt-Labor, State Politics, and the Policy Determinants of Minimum Wage Compliance." Perspectives on Politics 14 (2): 324-350. It won the "Best Paper" award from the American Political Science Association public policy section in 2016.

A lower incidence of minimum wage noncompliance has also been shown to be associated with lower rates of poverty, less reliance on social programs (like food stamps), higher state tax revenues, and a more level playing field for law-abiding employers in competitive industries.

My support for the proposed legislation is thus based on empirical evidence that treble damages (LD 372) and stronger agency powers and authorities (LD 2184) have significant deterrent effects on illegal minimum wage noncompliance.

Thank you for your time and consideration.