

RAISE THE WAGE

OHIOANS FOR A FAIR MINIMUM WAGE



PRESS RELEASE

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Bill Denies Raise to Some Employees, Weakens Protection Provisions in Voter-Approved Amendment

Columbus, Ohio – Minimum-wage opponents are supporting a bill in the Ohio House that would deny the new, voter-approved minimum wage to certain groups of employees and reverse some of its provisions aimed at protecting workers' rights, said Tim Burga of Ohioans for a Fair Minimum Wage.

Burga was referring to Substitute House Bill 690, which was introduced as enabling legislation for the newly passed Constitutional Amendment, better known to Ohio voters as Issue 2. Although legislation is not required for the law to take effect, lawmakers can pass laws clarifying certain provisions. The bill was sponsored by minimum-wage critic State Representative Bill Sietz (R - Cincinnati), and is expected to go before the Ohio General Assembly later this week.

At the Ohio statehouse today, Burga and other advocates of the newly passed Ohio Fair Minimum Wage Amendment charged that HB 690 goes too far and specifically contradicts some provisions of the voter-approved amendment. "Our opponents are attempting to do an end-run around the newly passed constitutional amendment, the will of the voters, and results of the November 7 election," said Burga.

Specifically, Burga said that the bill conflicts with the intent and purpose of the amendment. He outlined three particular objections:

- 1) The bill rewrites the voter-approved amendment to deny the new minimum wage to workers who were very clearly covered in the amendment, such as Home Healthcare Workers and Fire Fighters.
- 2) It changes Ohio court rules to protect "bad apple employers" from having to repay unpaid minimum wages to all of their employees.
- 3) And it eliminates the current Ohio rule banning agreements to work for less than the minimum wage, creating a "back door" provision which could eliminate the minimum wage altogether.

For these reasons, Burga and others urged the legislature not to pass HB 690. Rev. Alvin Hadley, on behalf of Let Justice Roll, said that "the legislature must reject this bill and uphold their commitment to the voters of Ohio. Voters who resoundingly stated on November 7 that the minimum wage should be raised and that low-wage workers deserve the protections outlined in the amendment."

Members of ACORN also attend the press conference, as well as Jennifer Farmer who spoke out on behalf of Home Healthcare workers and members of SEIU District 1199. She said that "by attempting to re-insert certain exemptions into this bill, the legislature is essentially telling Ohioans, that they have no regard for the laws of the land, nor the constitutional rights of Ohioans."

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