

Testimony of Yannet Lathrop

National Employment Law Project

In Support of H.B. 1484, Which Would Raise New Hampshire's Minimum Wage to \$17 Per Hour by 2029

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Chair Creighton, Vice Chair Avellani, and members of the New Hampshire House Labor, Industrial and Rehabilitative Services Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony. My Name is Yannet Lathrop, and I am a senior researcher and policy analyst for the National Employment Law Project (NELP).

NELP is a national nonprofit advocacy organization that for more than 50 years has sought to build a just and inclusive economy where all workers have expansive rights and thrive in good jobs. We partner with federal, state, and local lawmakers and local community-based groups on a wide range of workforce issues, including the minimum wage.

NELP testifies in support of HB 1484, which would gradually raise the New Hampshire minimum wage to \$17 by 2029.

A \$17 Minimum Wage Would Benefit Tens of Thousands of Workers and Bring the Wage Floor Closer to a Living Wage

As New Hampshire—and the nation—face a crisis of affordability, lawmakers can and should implement policies that enable working families to afford the basics, such as food, medical care, and rent. One of those policies should be raising the minimum wage.

The crisis of affordability is not only the result of rising prices, but also of low wages. While New Hampshire's current minimum wage (\$7.25) is not enough for even a single adult without children to make ends meet, a \$17 minimum wage would bring New Hampshire's wage floor much closer to a living wage for a household of one. As Table 1 shows, a \$7.25 minimum wage is less than one-third of the hourly wage needed by a single adult to pay for the basics, and leaves these households with an annual deficit of nearly \$37,000. In comparison, a \$17 minimum wage would boost the wage floor to nearly 70 percent of the living wage and reduce the annual deficit by more than half.

Table 1. Raising the Wage Floor to \$17 per Hour Would Significantly Narrow the Gap Between the Minimum Wage and the Living Wage for Single Adults Without Children

Wage Level	Living Wage (Single Adult)	Gap (Hourly)	Gap (Annual)	As Percent of Living Wage
\$7.25	\$24.78	\$17.53	\$36,462	29.3%
\$17.00	\$24.78	\$7.78	\$16,182	68.6%

NELP analysis of MIT Living Wage Calculator, <https://livingwage.mit.edu/states/33>. (Accessed January 30, 2026). Annual gap estimate assumes full-time year-round work.

Raising the minimum wage to \$17 by 2029 would benefit tens of thousands of New Hampshire workers. According to an estimate by the Economic Policy Institute, **91,000 workers** in New Hampshire (14 percent of the state workforce) earn less than \$17 per hour.¹ These workers would likely see a wage increase, along with thousands of others earning slightly above \$17 per hour as employers adjust their pay scales not only to comply with the new minimum wage law but also to maintain their wage ladders.

Research Finds that Minimum Wage Policies Raise Pay without Negative Effects

The minimum wage is one of the most researched topics in economics. Over the past three decades, researchers have developed and refined new methods for examining the impact of the minimum wage in isolation from other factors affecting the economy. The overwhelming majority of this new wave of studies find that minimum wages raise pay without affecting employment.

One of the earliest and most significant studies coming out of this new wave of minimum wage research, “Minimum Wage Effects Across State Borders” (2010), analyzed the impact of minimum wage increases across state borders by comparing employment patterns in more than 250 pairs of neighboring counties in the U.S. (including several in New York) that had different minimum wage rates between 1990 and 2006. The authors found no difference in job growth rates in the 250 pairs of neighboring counties; neither did they find evidence that higher minimum wages pushed businesses to cross the state line to areas with lower minimum wages²—disproving two of the main claims made by minimum wage opponents whenever a higher minimum wage is proposed. The study’s innovative approach of comparing neighboring counties on either side of a state line is generally recognized as especially effective at isolating the true impact of minimum wage differences, since neighboring counties otherwise tend to have very similar economic conditions.

Other studies have analyzed the impact of minimum wage policies on specific industries (such as restaurants³ and fast-food⁴), groups of workers (such as teens⁵), and small businesses.⁶ These studies came to basically the same conclusion: Minimum wage increases raise the pay of underpaid workers without affecting their employment, even during economic downturns,⁷ or when wage floors increase substantially to reach as much as 60 percent⁸ of the median wage.

“Meta-studies”—the analysis and synthesis of multiple studies on the same research topic—are one of the best ways to understand whether there is consensus around a topic. A 2009 meta-study of 64 individual studies on the impact of minimum wage increases, published in the *British Journal of Industrial Relations* by economists Hristos Doucouliagos and T. D. Stanley, shows that the bulk of analyses find close to no impact on employment.⁹

Drawing on the methodological insights of Doucouliagos and Stanley, a meta-study by Dale Belman and Paul Wolfson (2014) reviewed more than 70 studies and 439 distinct estimates to come to a very similar conclusion: “[I]t appears that if negative effects on employment are present, they are too small to be statistically detectable. Such effects would be too modest to have meaningful consequences in the dynamically changing labor markets of the United States.”¹⁰

A more recent study by Arin Dube and Ben Zipperer (2024)—two leading economic researchers—analyzed the findings of 88 minimum wage studies published since 1992. They found that minimum wage increases had negligible impacts on employment overall. The impacts were indistinguishable from zero when narrowing the scope of the analysis to studies published since 2010,¹¹ when advances in methodology design sped up.

Conclusion and Recommendations

NELP urges a favorable report on HB 1484. Raising the minimum wage to \$17 by 2029 would narrow the gap between the minimum and the living wage, allowing workers to better afford basic necessities. The minimum wage is a policy that has been widely studied and proven to raise the earnings of underpaid workers without detrimental effects on jobs.

Endnotes

¹ "Low Wage Workforce Tracker," Economic Policy Institute, accessed January 30, 2026, <https://www.epi.org/low-wage-workforce/>.

² Arindrajit Dube, T. William Lester and Michael Reich, "Minimum Wage Effects Across State Borders: Estimates Using Contiguous Counties," *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 92(4): 945-964 (November 2010). A summary of the study prepared by NELP is available at <https://s27147.pcdn.co/app/uploads/2015/03/Dube-Lester-Reich-Summary-4-22-11.pdf>.

³ Sylvia Allegretto, Arindrajit Dube, Michael Reich, and Ben Zipperer, "Credible Research Designs for Minimum Wage Studies: A Response to Neumark, Salas, and Wascher," *ILR Review*, 70(3): 559-592 (May 2017).

⁴ Justin C. Wiltshire, Carl McPherson, Michael Reich and Denis Sosinskiy, "Minimum Wage Effects and Monopsony Explanations," *Journal of Labor Economics* (forthcoming). Currently accessible from University of California, Berkeley, Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, revised December 2024, <https://irle.berkeley.edu/publications/working-papers/minimum-wage-effects-and-monopsony-explanations/>.

⁵ See ibid.; and Sylvia Allegretto, Arindrajit Dube and Michael Reich, "Do Minimum Wages Really Reduce Teen Employment? Accounting for Heterogeneity and Selectivity in State Panel Data," *Industrial Relations*, 50: 205-240 (April 2011), <https://irle.berkeley.edu/publications/working-papers/do-minimum-wages-really-reduce-teen-employment-accounting-for-heterogeneity-and-selectivity-in-state-panel-data-wp/>.

⁶ Jesse Wursten and Michael Reich, "Small Businesses and the Minimum Wage," University of California, Berkeley, IRLE Working Paper No.102-23, March 2023, <https://irle.berkeley.edu/publications/working-papers/small-businesses-and-the-minimum-wage/>.

⁷ Sylvia Allegretto et al., "Do Minimum Wages Really Reduce Teen Employment? Accounting for Heterogeneity and Selectivity in State Panel Data," op. cit.

⁸ Doruk Cengiz, Arindrajit Dube, Attila Lindner, and Ben Zipperer, "The Effect of Minimum Wages on Low-Wage Jobs," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 134(3): 1405-1454 (August 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjz014>. See also Elisabeth Jacobs, "What Happens When You Raise the Minimum Wage? A Q&A with Arin Dube," *WorkRise*, April 5, 2021, <https://workrisenetwork.org/working-knowledge/what-happens-when-you-raise-minimum-wage-q-a-arin-dube>.

⁹ Hristos Doucouliagos and T.D. Stanley, "Publication Selection Bias in Minimum-Wage Research? A Meta-Regression Analysis," *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 47(2): 406- 428 (June 2009). Abstract available from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1467-8543.2009.00723.x>.

¹⁰ Paul Wolfson and Dale Belman, *What Does the Minimum Wage Do?* Kalamazoo, MI: Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 2014, https://research.upjohn.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1245&context=up_press.

¹¹ Arindrajit Dube & Ben Zipperer, "Own-Wage Elasticity: Quantifying the Impact of Minimum Wages on Employment," National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper 32925, <https://www.nber.org/papers/w32925>. See also, Arin Dube, "A New Database, Quantifying the Minimum Wage Effect on Jobs," Substack, September 22, 2024, <https://arindube.substack.com/p/a-new-database-quantifying-the-minimum>; and Ben Zipperer, "Most minimum wage studies have found little or no job loss," Working Economics Blog, September 9, 2024, <https://www.epi.org/blog/most-minimum-wage-studies-have-found-little-or-no-job-loss/>.