



April 16, 2019

Senator John Gordner  
Main Capitol  
Room 177  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Senator Gordner:

Governor Tom Wolf is calling for an increase in the minimum wage to \$12 per hour this year, increasing annually to reach \$15 per hour by 2025. We have heard a number of lawmakers suggest that some compromise could be considered. As an organization that represents over 420 employers in Columbia and Montour counties, the Columbia Montour Chamber of Commerce continues to oppose any increase.

A strong economy has led to low unemployment rates. As businesses are challenged to attract employees, market conditions have led to higher wage rates. There are at least hundreds, if not thousands, of unfilled positions in Columbia County alone, with starting wages well above \$7.25 per hour. Starting rates for unskilled positions at local manufacturers range from \$10.50 to \$13.00, with semi-skilled positions starting in the \$15 to \$18 range. Increasing the minimum wage is not necessary to create viable opportunities for people who are currently underemployed. In fact, the report by the Independent Fiscal Office estimates that 33,000 job opportunities could be lost as a result of an increase. These job losses are most likely to occur with our small and service-oriented businesses.

Also, consider that all of Pennsylvania's neighboring states have minimum wage rates below \$12.00 per hour. Increasing the minimum wage could drive existing jobs to these neighboring states, or elsewhere, and put the Commonwealth at a competitive disadvantage in attracting businesses. Large employers with multiple facilities in particular are able to shift production loads based upon market conditions.

Not only is an increase in the minimum wage not necessary, but it could be harmful to Pennsylvania's economy. We hope you recognize these factors and actively oppose any increase in the minimum wage. Please feel free to contact me at 570-784-2522 if you would like to discuss the issue further.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fred Gaffney". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Fred Gaffney  
President

cc: Representative Kurt Masser  
Representative David Millard