

From: Laura Mistretta [mailto:limistretta@gmail.com]

Sent: Wednesday, February 08, 2017 10:20 AM

Subject: Public comment for minimum wage hearing

My name is Laura Mistretta and I live in Burlington. I'm writing you today to express my firm support for VT raising the minimum wage to at least \$15/hr. I work as a tenant advocate and too often see folks getting evicted because they are over-burdened by housing costs (ideally housing should be 30% of a household's income) and any unexpected cost can totally derail them. According to the Inclusionary Zoning report (<https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/sites/default/files/u308/IZDRAFTReportJanuary2017.pdf>) recently released, in Burlington 58% of households are paying more than 30% of their household costs on housing.

The fact is this isn't just a VT problem, 63% of Americans don't have enough savings to cover a \$500 emergency (<http://www.forbes.com/sites/maggiemcgrath/2016/01/06/63-of-americans-dont-have-enough-savings-to-cover-a-500-emergency/#299c522b6dde>), but VT can do something to ensure that people living here can live with greater peace of mind and greater financial security by raising the minimum wage.

Finally, VT prides itself on being a state known to value local food, quality local products and environmentally conscious living, but all of these things take money. Raising the minimum wage will increase the accessibility to these VT ideals and values to more VTers thereby strengthening our local economy.

In all honesty, I don't even believe \$15/hr is enough, but it would be a start and a crucial step towards strengthening VT families and VT businesses.

Sincerely,
Laura Mistretta