

The Vermont State Labor Council AFL CIO is the voice of unionized workers at the state level. Essentially we work to promote improved wages, health and retirement benefits, and working conditions with regard for the autonomy and integrity of affiliated unions. Legislatively we are charged with safeguarding and promoting the principles of collective bargaining, the rights of working people and consumers, and the security and welfare of all people.

I am a retired letter carrier and a member of the National Association of Letter Carriers AFL CIO. I currently serve as the President of the Vermont State Labor Council AFL CIO. We support legislation for raising the minimum wage, paid family and medical leave, card check, and enforcement of current statutes concerning worker misclassification because these are issues relevant to the lives of working Vermonters. Many union workers have the benefit of wages higher than the current and proposed \$15 an hour minimum wage, sick leave, and retirement plans but we believe these to be rightful compensation for any worker.

This committee has the opportunity to protect the dignity of workers in the new millennium. As technology changes the face of the workplace, we must continue to recognize the value of working people and their claim to a share of the wealth they make. McDonald's Corporation wealth exists because there is someone there to flip the burgers. Policy decisions should recognize the rights and protections of workers in an on demand economy. During my tenure at the VSLC AFL CIO I have made it a point to work at part time minimum wage jobs. I currently work predominantly with women. Some are young college graduates and students living with their parents, some with children, others working a second job, and some elder members of the workforce, like me. There are few full time employment opportunities. During slow periods there are fewer work hours. Without my retirement benefits, I could not survive on the wages I make even if I worked fulltime.

Working people deserve the dignity of being able to feed their family, put a roof over their head, send their children to college, and set aside funds for retirement. For far too many Vermonters these basic needs are out of reach. Raising the minimum wage will raise the standard of living for many working Vermonters. A fair day's work deserves a fair day's wage.