

Testimony Supporting HB: 5291

Small Business Owners Support Increased Minimum Wage

Committee on Labor and Public Employees

February, 28, 2012

To the Co-Chairs and esteemed members of the Labor and Public Employees committee: Hello, my name is Kris Hoskins. I am the president of the family owned corporation, Arrow Window Shade Manufacturing Company at 1252 Berlin Turnpike, Wethersfield, CT. I have operated my business here at this location for the last 14 years, and have been doing business as Arrow Window Shade Manufacturing Company a total of 32 years and I support the increase of Connecticut's minimum wage.

Business can be hectic as a small business owner. Here at my company, we're constantly on the go. We manufacture and customize many of the products we sell and install them too. We also serve as an open-door retailer, with customers coming in and out to place, pick-up and purchase items during store hours. But regardless of how hectic it gets, it's never too hectic for me to take my employees livelihood into consideration.

I work shoulder to shoulder with my guys everyday – I'm not just their boss, but they're co-worker as well and I know that they work hard to earn a decent living. My workers start off at \$12.00 an hour - we're not a big business, we're a tiny shop – but we know that being a small business is no excuse for not paying our employees a living wage.

Some of these politicians and business owners are so out of touch, so disconnected. They have a lot to say, but they can't answer the easy questions that everyday working folks have to answer. Go ahead and ask them: how much is a gallon of milk? I'd bet you you'd be hard pressed to get a straight answer. Folks working on minimum wage have to answer that question every time they open their wallets to make the choice between feeding their families and keeping the lights on.

This bill really needs to pass. These people really need to wake up and get their heads out of the sand and see what's going on. These business owners who say they can't afford it – yes they can. Just forgo this years new BMW and drive the one from two years ago – you'll be fine. Business owners want loyalty – they're thinking "me, me, me and what's best for the bottom-line" but don't realize that loyalty is a two way street. It's not fair to your employee when you're thinking about a new \$600,000.00 home and she's trying to piece together bus fare and rent money. It's not fair when you're workers are desperate for overtime and your blowing the profits on the golf course.

It's time for business owners to stand-up to their responsibilities and do what's right and do it now. Raise the minimum wage.