



My members see the stagnant wages and economic anxiety that most American families are facing as one of the major factors holding the economy back. And across the political spectrum, economists recognize that until we restore wage growth for working and middle class Americans, consumer spending will not be where we need it to be to help businesses thrive and grow.

That's why local businesses support raising the minimum wage—because that extra money in the pockets of the lowest paid workers will be spent immediately in the local economy. These workers are not taking fancy trips to Europe or making investments in mutual funds. They are spending it at the grocery store, the pharmacy, and the auto-repair in their communities. In fact, since most low-wage workers work for the major chains, boosting the minimum wage means that rather than going to Wal-Mart or McDonald's bank accounts – whether in Bentonville or Chicago or in the Cayman Islands – more revenue from Connecticut's customers will be paid back out to Connecticut's workers who will spend it at local businesses.

Too many people forget that workers are also consumers. Consumer spending drives 70 percent of our economy, and we must repower consumer spending if we are going to repower our economy.

3. Raising the Minimum Wage Disproportionately Helps Working Women

Finally, as a representative of women-owned businesses I want to emphasize that working women, particularly women of color, represent the greatest percentage of workers to benefit from increasing the minimum wage. The typical low-wage worker is an adult woman. Think of your waitress at Appleby's, or the cashier who rings you up at Wal-Mart. Think of the childcare center worker who takes care of your son or daughter, or the health aide who helps your mother or grandfather.

Many of the women business owners who belong to the U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce left the workforce to start their own businesses because they felt that jobs where women worked