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Dr. Chip Beckett, DVM

OPPOSING SB-387

Dear Senators and Representatives of the Labor Committee,

I am writing today in opposition to the proposed increase in the minimum wage, because I think it is a particularly bad idea at this time. I own a veterinary practice and a farm, both of which employ people at minimum wage and considerably more depending on the job classification.

Connecticut's worst in the nation business environment has increased the income taxes paid by owners percentagewise, but not always in dollars because many of us have had dramatically falling business and personal incomes since 2008. Self-employment income is down not only for Wall St. bonuses, but also for Main St. businesses, due to a lack of customers coming through the door every day. Adjusting costs of the business to match the current client base requires less people working than 5 years ago, deferral of repairs, aging and obsolete production equipment, less supplies and resale items, and decreasing real estate footprints are all strategies virtually all businesses have used to stay in business rather than closing. We are partners with the state in that going businesses fund the unemployment system, workman's comp system, expanded sales taxes, state licenses and registrations, motor vehicle fees, fuel taxes, and Town property taxes. These costs that are revenue to the State of Connecticut, often more than the entire business profits of the organization, at least in pass through entities like mine. The worst in the nation business climate makes closing the doors a more viable option for us individually, which more and more of my compatriots are choosing to do. Then the state loses jobs and revenue in a very substantial way.

Let me address the minimum wage itself. IT IS A TRAINING WAGE ONLY. Our use of minimum wage is to start students who seriously want to work in veterinary medicine a chance to see how the industry works. When I was young, I volunteered. With the current litigious business environment, I pay the promising ones as employees so that they are covered by workman's comp in case they were to be hurt or injured in seeing what we do. Animals can be unpredictable, whether it is a cat or a cow. I want the security for them to know that they have appropriate medical care while they work with us during a school vacation learning about the world of work, animals and medicine.