



State Of Connecticut Labor and Public Employees Committee  
Public Hearing  
Tuesday, February 18, 2014

Testimony presented by:  
Jerry Brick, General Manager  
Lake Compounce Family Theme Park  
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Good Afternoon to all in attendance. My Name is Jerry Brick and I am the General Manager of Lake Compounce Amusement Park in Bristol/Southington, CT. Our property is the longest continuously running amusement park in North America and holds numerous other national and international awards and recognitions.

As I'm sure you are all aware, supporting and operating this business is a tremendous and costly undertaking at times. In today's economy we continuously face increases in operation costs even though businesses and individuals are subject to higher taxes.

With roughly 130 days for our business to generate cash flow to support a full-time, year-round staff of 40 and roughly 1,200 seasonal workers, the topic of Connecticut's minimum wage is one in which some valid arguments must be heard in regard to the small business community.

Connecticut already pays one of the highest minimum wages in the region. Competing businesses in neighboring states are positioned to have a distinct pricing advantage over us simply based on the disparity in payroll – generally the largest operational expense.

Due to our May-December operating schedule, we rely largely on high school and college students, who work for the company April through December each year. A majority earns the minimum wage, but a large number of returnees and seasonal managers receive a higher rate of pay based on work performance.

Recently a statement was made that if the state's minimum wage were to increase to \$10.10 in the foreseeable future, it would not hurt businesses. I would respectively like to disagree with that statement.



As many of us here today know, Connecticut is in the business of trying to compete for business. That is certainly true of our industry, which includes other parks, attractions and accommodations across the state – many of which hire seasonal employees.

Opening the gates each operating day at Lake Compounce has an enormous price tag associated with it and our biggest day-to-day expense is payroll.

Please take into consideration the following:

\* During an average week of summer of 2013 our seasonal hourly employees worked an average of 23,440 hours. Each increase in the minimum wage by 25 cents would increase our weekly payroll by \$5,860.

\* The increase in payroll increases our workers compensation costs, unemployment costs, payroll taxes

Approximately 1/3 of our visitors come from out of state. This is partially due to the fact that we are a unique and enticing destination as well as advertising efforts paid completely by our business. And factor in the competition to lure vacationers, both state residents and those visiting from out of state. Neighboring states are paying far less in wages which already puts Connecticut businesses at a disadvantage.

Lake Compounce is known throughout New England as an affordable seasonal destination for families. Increasing minimum wage even further may leave us with no choice other than to increase our prices which would ultimately hurt that reputation causing major detriment to our business.

Spiraling minimum wages are not the solution to fixing issues at the local or state level. Each increase does have a negative impact on business.

On behalf of Lake Compounce, I encourage the committee to help reshape a healthy business climate here in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Jerry Brick  
General Manager  
Lake Compounce Family Theme Park