

What to say to your MLA

I'm writing/calling regarding minimum wage in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan has the second lowest minimum wage in Canada. I have a problem with that. 1 in 10 people living in Saskatchewan live in poverty. I believe no worker should live on poverty wages. Based on Saskatchewan's 2015 Labour Force Survey, 23% of Saskatchewan workers earn less than \$15/hr. 1 in 4 Saskatchewan children live in poverty, which is the second highest rate in Canada.

We know low wages affects marginalized people the worst. The majority of people making less than \$15 are women. 64% of aboriginal children in Saskatchewan live in poverty. Wage gaps are attributed to race, gender, sexual expression and nationality.

For a parent working full time at Saskatchewan's current minimum wage of \$10.96/hour, minimum wage pays just over \$20,800 per year – that's roughly \$15,000 below the poverty line for a family of four, or \$40,000 below the poverty line in more fair methods of measuring income (such as the living wage method).

Do you think people can survive on minimum wage? How would your life change if you were to live on minimum wage?

(Insert personal story if you'd like - For example – I worry my kids will never be able to move out. Wages haven't kept up with the cost of inflation. I remember when I left home, my rent was \$375 a month. I made 6 bucks an hour. I worked 62 hours a month to pay rent. Rent in Saskatoon now averages \$973 for a 1 bedroom apartment. With minimum wage at \$10.96, I'd have to work 89 hours just to make rent. Not to mention the cost of food and utilities has risen substantially.)

I've seen success in other places that have legislated \$15 minimum wage. For example, Seattle saw economic growth and realized that it saved money on public programming by allowing workers to make a decent wage. Alberta and Ontario have committed to a \$15 wage. I would like to think of my province as a province that is caring and compassionate. One that is fair and doesn't marginalize people on purpose. At least, my friends in this province represent those values.

As my elected government representative, can I count on you to stand up for workers in Saskatchewan by calling on your government to legislate a \$15 wage? Can I count on you to stand up for the same values my friends and I share?