

Introduction

I'm _____, and 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).

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.

If you were to win leadership of the Sask Party, will you commit to increasing minimum wages above indexing, which we have seen, clearly doesn't work. While a living wage is over \$15, \$15 is a good place to start. If so, what is your timeline for minimum wage increases?

SPECIFIC TO CANDIDATES:

Tina Beaudry Mellor- You said "This is not the time to impose a \$15 minimum wage" in a tweet, explaining that we already index our minimum wage. Do you think people can live on minimum wage? Are you aware that increasing the minimum wage would stimulate the economy and this is exactly the time to create fair wages in Saskatchewan? Are you aware that 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. I know your government has a formula to increase minimum wage, but I really feel it's not working. \$15 wages have been proven as a success in places like Seattle. As a woman who has advocated for equal voice, an organization that supports women in politics, will you help us by reconsidering your thoughts on \$15 minimum wages so that women won't continue to be as marginalized in the work force?

Ken Cheveldayoff – I'm calling/writing to you regarding wages in Saskatchewan. Over the past few years, I've heard how our province is booming and your government was growing Saskatchewan. I also saw the cost of living rise substantially. I'm concerned with where this province is headed. You have bachelors in economics. I'm sure you're aware of the higher success rate of a stimulus budget as opposed to an austerity budget. We know that low wage earners reinvest that money into their local economy. That's just what we need right now to help our economy. I know your government has a formula to increase minimum wage, but I really feel it's not working. Would you commit to looking at

the formula to take into account cost of living increases in a more fair way or better yet, legislate a minimum wage of \$15 in Saskatchewan?

Alanna Koch – I'm calling/writing you to ask for your plans for wages in Saskatchewan if you were elected leader. You've been called the most progressive candidate so I'm hopeful that you understand that increasing minimum wages to \$15 in Saskatchewan will stimulate our economy and lift 23% of Saskatchewan's workers. It's not right that so many workers live below the poverty line. I hope you believe that no one who works full time should live in poverty. Can you please share with me your plans regarding minimum wage in Saskatchewan?

Scott Moe- You've talked about your biggest priority – population growth. Would it not make sense to create a wage that would attract people to come live and work in Saskatchewan? You've mentioned the need for sustainable investment. Investing in people is the Saskatchewan way. Creating wages families can live on would help our economy. Studies show increases to the minimum wage helps the economy because it is reinvested back here at home. The formula for increasing minimum wage hasn't worked. We have the second lowest minimum wage in the country, and at a time where cost of living has risen substantially. What are your plans to address workers who work full time and still live in poverty? Will you commit to a timeline of increasing the minimum wage to \$15?

Rob Clarke- You announced that you will lift the wage freeze on Saskatchewan workers, if elected. Will you also legislate a minimum wage of \$15? You have acknowledged that in these tough economic times, the Sask party pushed skilled workers out of the province with this freeze. You have the advantage of not having been tied to the Sask Party's decision to create the formula currently used to index minimum wage in Saskatchewan with a result of the second lowest minimum wage in the country. This would set you apart from other candidates. Can I get your commitment to \$15 minimum wage in Saskatchewan?

Gord Wyant-You mentioned that the Sask Party needs to listen to the voters. This excited me and made me hopeful that you'd consider a minimum wage of \$15. You've sited the guiding principals, economic growth as the engine of the economy. There is proof that when you lift minimum wages, the money gets reinvested in local economy thus actually growing the economy. Further, the strong social safety net that encourages individuals to become self sufficient. We see that people are working full time and living in poverty. That's not a great incentive to enter or stay in the work force. If we had \$15 wages, we could lift 23% of Saskatchewan workers' wages.