

**MINUTES OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE OPERATIONS AND ELECTIONS**

**Seventy-Eighth Session
March 11, 2015**

The subcommittee of the Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections was called to order by Chair Patricia Farley at 3:06 p.m. on Wednesday, March 11, 2015, in Room 1214 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4412 of the Grant Sawyer State Office building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. [Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Patricia Farley, Chair
Senator James A. Settelmeyer, Vice Chair

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Senator Greg Brower
Senator Kelvin Atkinson
Senator Tick Segerblom

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Senator Ruben J. Kihuen, Senatorial District No. 10

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Michael Stewart, Policy Analyst
Brenda Erdoes, Legislative Counsel
Linda Hiller, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Yvanna Cancela, Culinary Workers Union Local 226
Sylver Uschold, Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada

Chair Farley:

I will open the hearing on Senate Joint Resolution 8. Senator Kihuen will introduce the bill in place of Senator Segerblom, who will be joining us in a few minutes.

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 8: Amends the Nevada Constitution to increase the minimum wage per hour worked. (BDR C-425)

Senator Ruben J. Kihuen (Senatorial District No. 10):

I will present Senate Joint Resolution 8 which amends the Nevada Constitution to increase the minimum wage. I have Senator Segerblom's testimony:

Twenty-one states have raised their minimum wage for 2015, including six Western states: Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii, Oregon and Washington.

In 2006, Article 15 of the Nevada Constitution was amended to include section 16 which established a State minimum wage. On the effective date, an employer was required to pay a wage of \$5.15 per hour if the employer provided health benefits and \$6.15 an hour if the employer did not provide such benefits.

Wages are adjusted annually by July 1 each year by the amount of increases in the federal minimum wage over \$5.15 per hour or, if greater, by the cumulative increase in the cost of living as measured by the percentage increase by the Consumer Price Index, the CPI. This information is published by the United States Department of Labor.

Currently, the minimum wage for Nevada employees with health benefits is \$7.25 per hour while the minimum wage for all other employees is \$8.25 per hour. Senate Joint Resolution 8 proposes to increase the minimum wage to \$15 per hour if the employer provides health benefits and \$16 per hour if the employer does not provide such benefits.

Wages will be adjusted annually by July 1 each year by the amount of increases in the federal wage over \$15 an hour or, if greater, by

the cumulative increase in the cost of living as measured by the percentage increase by the CPI beginning December 31, 2018.

These are the remarks of Senator Tick Segerblom.

On a personal note, I want to express that I support an increase in minimum wage. When people start making more money, not only are they able to pay their rent, they are able to provide for their families, they can put gas in their cars and they will also help stimulate our economy. The more disposable income that people have, the more businesses will be able to do and the more people they will hire.

As a general principle, I support this resolution as an increase in minimum wage.

Senator Settelmeyer:

Senator Kihuen, I am curious as to how the \$15 to \$16 an hour minimum wage was determined. In San Francisco, it is \$15 an hour, but it is not quite as expensive to live in Nevada as it is in San Francisco.

Senator Kihuen:

I am not exactly sure how Senator Segerblom came up with the \$15 an hour calculation. I do know, especially when considering that we are seeing pieces of legislation like getting rid of prevailing wage, that we are running the risk of people making a lot less money.

We need to ensure people are making livable wages. I believe that the \$15 an hour is a livable wage. That is enough for people to pay rent, put food on the table, gas in their cars and provide for their families.

Chair Farley:

I have a list of proponents wishing to testify.

Yvanna Cancela (Culinary Workers Union Local 226):

It is really important that this issue comes before this body today. I want to start by giving facts about how we got to this point with minimum wage in the U.S. Constitution through the ballot initiative.

In 2004, voters overwhelmingly supported raising the minimum wage, so much so that the issue got more votes than George W. Bush in the 2004 presidential

election. This is an issue that has come before the voters who strongly supported it. If the issue appeared before the voters again, it would overwhelmingly receive mass support to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour.

At the Culinary Union, our members almost all make more than minimum wage an hour. They are able to provide for their families and to have security and peace of mind because they are able to put food on the table. That kind of security is invaluable.

Our members are proof that employers can afford to pay more. By working together with employees, they are able to create some of the best jobs in what are typically low-wage hourly, low-income jobs. In Las Vegas, we have proven that it does not have to be the case.

In raising the minimum wage, you elevate hundreds of thousands of other workers in the State to that level. That not only affects the local economy, but it affects each person's life. Setting that floor higher so that workers have the same opportunity as our members do is not only good for them but good for the State.

Sylvester Uschold (Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada):

I live in Las Vegas and I am a fast-food worker. I am 17 years old and am supporting my family because my parents lost their jobs. In low-wage jobs, it is important to know that 80 percent of the time, workers do not get 40 hours a week.

I am lucky enough to work about 30 hours a week, and that is on a busy week. This year I will make about \$12,870 before taxes; hopefully after taxes, I will make about \$10,000.

A living wage in Clark County over a year is \$20,036, and I make less than half of that. I have to pay bills, I have to buy groceries and I have to pay for medication. After that, I do not have enough money to buy a bus pass to get to work so I have to walk. It is really hard considering that I am only 17 years old and I have to take care of my family.

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The minimum wage in Nevada does not add up to a livable wage. If we had \$15 an hour, Nevadans could have the chance to move out of poverty. It would allow us to be self-sufficient and take care of our own needs.

Chair Farley:

I close this subcommittee meeting at 3:19 p.m. We will begin a full Committee meeting.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Haley Johnson,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator Patricia Farley, Chair

DATE: _____

| EXHIBIT SUMMARY | | | | |
|-----------------|---------|----|-------------------|-------------------|
| Bill | Exhibit | | Witness or Agency | Description |
| | A | 1 | | Agenda |
| | B | 18 | | Attendance Roster |