economy would suffer, but the reality is quite the opposite. Economic conditions could be greatly improved with a rise in minimum wage, and that is exactly why this is an issue much larger than just the working class. Minimum wage affects all classes and has a large effect on the state of the economy. For these reasons, I propose that minimum wage should be increased to a rate that will adequately provide working families with the funds necessary to survive.

Minimum wage was first enacted in 1938 to ensure that workers were maintaining a livable wage. This was mandated under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) of 1938, which also made sure that workers were free from exploitation and unsatisfactory workplace conditions. At the time of this legislation, minimum wage was set at \$0.25 per hour; this equates to approximately \$4 in 2013. Congress monitored the economy and, through the 60s and 70s, made increases to keep minimum wage at an appropriate level. Minimum wage reached its highest value in 1968 when it was raised to \$1.60, or about \$10.50 per hour today, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Since then, the worth of minimum wage has declined drastically, and now federally stands at \$7.25 per hour. FLSA was received well by workers but opposed heavily by business owners, who argued that a required pay rate would hurt the economy and smaller companies. These are the ma

As a college student, I have worked several minimum wage jobs, and I currently have two part-time jobs. In high school, I held multiple minimum wage positions. Young workers, like myself, contribute to a big misconception that all minimum wage workers are high school students, and this is not true. Many argue that a minimum wage increase will not be beneficial because the majority of minimum wage workers are not full-time or working to make a living. The reality, in fact, is that about four-fifths of minimum wage workers are over the age of 25 (Minimum Wage Workers 11). This means that the majority of minimum wage workers are likely full-time, either still students in college or well into adulthood. Their low-paying job is their career; it is their sole source of income. Coming from a student's perspective, I would love to see an increase in minimum wage for obvious reasons: college is expensive, and who wouldn't want to earn more money? However, I do understand that full-time workers are in much more need of a pay raise. These are the people that an increase is targeted at. These are the people that would benefit the most.

The most important aim of increasing the minimum wage is to reduce the rate of full-time workers living in poverty. By keeping the minimum wage at an unlivable rate, we make certain jobs unworthy of even the lowest standard of living. Government subsidy programs have diminished the value of low-paying jobs, and while they provide protection from poverty, these programs should not be a primary source of income for working families. Raising the minimum wage eliminates the need for such programs because all the necessary funds would come from one source: a hard-earned paycheck. Opponents of raising the minimum wage claim that an increase would do nothing to solve poverty, and this is not far from the truth. Poverty is a much larger issue than raising the minimum wage can solve. According to the United States Census Bureau, about 50 million Americans were living in poverty in 2012 (Bishaw 1). Of these

millions of people, only about 10.4 million were working or looking for work (Plumer n.p.). The remaining 40 million were not looking for work and are now surviving through programs such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and food stamps, which are funded by the working American's tax dollars. This data does support the opposing party's position that increasing minimum wage

CEOs would be able to better predict the cost of rent, insurance, supplies, etc. Prince's argument

minimum wage has little to no effect on employment availability, such as the one conducted by Arindrajit Dube, T. William Lester, and Michael Reich in 2007. The researchers studied the employment rates of a specific restaurant in San Francisco between minimum wage changes. Dube, Lester, and Reich found no significant change in the job availability during this time (Dube, Lester, and Reich 2). This supports the claim that a raise in minimum wage does not increase unemployment. An increase in pay would also improve job retention. When employees are making more money, they will not need to search out jobs with higher pay. This is a benefit for both the workers and the employers. Businesses will not have to compensate for constant employee turnover and will be staffed with long-term workers. The employees will avoid the hassle of job hunting and feel confident in the job they have. This would boost job satisfaction and workers will be more likely to put their best effort into their jobs, creating a more positive work environment overall.

Currently, a minimum wage increase is still being debated in Congress. While the majority seems to agree than a raise will be in the near future, there is still argument regarding how high that raise will be. In February 2013, President Obama passed a bill stating that the federal minimum wage will be raised to \$9 by 2015 (Lowrey, n.p.). This is a huge step in the right direction. If the Federal government increases the minimum wage, workers will see an immediate change in their income. For many families, a raise would be the necessary push to get them closer to the poverty line. However, an increase will do little good if it is not adjusted to inflation. For an individual supporting a family of four to meet the poverty line, the minimum wage would have to increase to approximately \$12 per hour. So, in response to Obama's original proposal, Democratic representatives Tom Harkin and George Miller insisted on an increase to \$10.10 per hour. This raise would be gradual and adjusted to inflation in small increments

(Sullivan n.p.). With this raise, full-time workers would earn about \$20,000 per year: not quite enough to push them over the poverty line, but still a noticeable improvement from their current yearly earnings. In early November 2013, President Obama announced his support of the legislation titled the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2013. The act promises to increase the minimum wage and consistently index it to inflation, as well as increase the pay for tipped workers until it is 70% of the federal minimum wage.

The benefits of raising the minimum wage reach much further than just the lowest paid workers. Removing f5 708.48per yeh f

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