

To whom it may concern,

My name is Byron Delmonico, a local entertainment venue owner who would like to submit the following testimonial in regards to the minimum wage bills that are on the docket.

"The minimum wage raise will hurt both our business and our employees. This upward pressure on an entry level job has made our expenses rise much higher than our ability to raise prices. Are prices are set on more of a national basis with escape rooms all over the country creating travel enthusiasts that are experiencing businesses in areas with labor rates closer to \$10/ hour. We simply can't afford to pay our employees a high base wage. We create incentives for employees to raise their compensation during peak demand periods and the lower wages allow the business to sustain during periods of weak demand. If these bills are passed, we will have no choice but to struggle out the last 2 years of our lease and then move our business to a more business-friendly state. The minimum wage jobs were not meant for residents to raise a family on they were meant to get residents into the workforce. I will not be able to hire anyone that is unskilled, including youth, during the period before we move from the state. This will not only make it extremely hard for businesses but almost impossible for a high school kid to find their first job. Not to mention the price increases you will see on all goods and services. This is basic economics and I am extremely disappointed these bills show such a lack of understanding on such a basic level. This bill will negatively affect every stakeholder involved, either immediately or in the future.

The business climate has been so difficult for small business owners across the country, these changes will skew Rhode Island even further away from comparative markets. If the state keeps being anti business you are going to see so many businesses like CVS and Hasboro are just not going to want to be a part of RI.

H.5029 sets the minimum wage for 2026 at \$16 per hour, 2027 at \$17 per hour, 2028 at \$18 per hour, 2029 at \$19 per hour and for 2030 at \$20 per hour. All increments would take effect January 1st of the respective year.

<https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/BillText/BillText25/HouseText25/H5029.pdf>

H.5508 increases the minimum wage from the current \$15 per hour to \$20 per hour effective January 1, 2026. <https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/BillText/BillText25/HouseText25/H5508.pdf>

Thank you for your consideration,

Byron Delmonico
Owner & CEO
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