

## Minimum Wage Campaign Survey

What do businesses operators and Madison residents think about the Madison Fair Wage Campaign that was announced last Monday? The Campaign calls for a \$7.75 an hour minimum wage increase, a 50% increase over the Federal minimum wage, for virtually every worker in the City of Madison.

Two associations, each consisting of approximately 250 or more contacts, a neighborhood association and a business association, were polled via email. 11.5% of the business contacts and 12.8% of the neighborhood contacts responded to the email questionnaire.

Each group was asked the following question.

What are your thoughts on the campaign for a \$7.75 an hour minimum wage. If you don't want to share your detailed thoughts, please just send a "For" or "Against" in the body of the Email." (In addition, members of the neighborhood group were asked not to respond if they were a business owner, because we wanted responses from people representing the workforce).

The table below summarizes the results. 42% of business and 59% of workforce were unambiguously against the campaign. 19% of the business group and 34% of the workforce group was unambiguously for the increase. There was a faction of 32% of the business group and 7% of the workforce group who were for a wage increase, however with reservations or concerns about the details of the wage increase initiative.

	Against Wage Increase	For Wage Increase	For, with Reservations	No Opinion
Business	42%	19%	32%	7%
Residents	59%	34%	7%	0
Average	50%	27%	20%	7%

Those who voted against the wage increase were more likely to articulate their opposition (overall more than 50%) by writing to support their opposition, and a majority of these oppositions came from the neighborhood group (65%). By comparison, less than 20% of the total of both groups unambiguously for the wage increase stated why the wage increase had merit. Many of the "Against" responses stated that local government has no place in dictating wages, and some added that there were more important issues for local government to address including initiatives to stimulate economic growth and to get people to work.

Many businesses stated that they already pay full time employees in excess of \$7.75 per hour. Some of those stated that they were concerned that the wage increase would discourage hiring of part time help, especially students who they may pay less than \$7.75 per hour. Others expressed concern about the ripple effect on other wage increases and the prices; for example union wages that are contractually tied to minimum wage; another concern was whether all employees would have the expectation that their wage would also be increased (by 50% or by the \$2.60 per hour hike); and there were concerns of general cost-of-living increases in Madison as a result of this initiative. The logical question that follows is who is the wage increase really meant to help?. (See the Editorial in Sunday's Wisconsin State Journal). The concern was apparent that a minimum wage increase could trigger wage increases not only in Madison but for many employees Statewide who are under wage contracts, which would ripple out to all workers.

Those reservations from 20% of the respondents from both groups who generally supported a wage increase with reservations expressed a variety of concerns (many of which are presented above).

Thanks to all of those who took the time to participate.

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