

Letter to Senator Dave Thompson by Howard Schneider

In his March 14 Legislative Update, Senator Dave Thompson suggested four reasons to oppose minimum wage hikes. He is wrong on all four.

He asserted that most incoming e-mails are opposed to minimum wage hikes, but provided no specifics.

However, the March 2013 Gallup Poll showed that 71% would vote to raise the minimum wage to \$9 an hour. Even 50% of Republicans were in favor. A sample of 7,000 2013 State Fair attendees showed that 66% agreed that the minimum wage should be increased to \$8.50 or \$9.50 an hour. The non-partisan House Public Information Services Office conducted this poll.

Sen. Thompson also stated that that a minimum wage hike would result in unemployment among younger and lower-skilled workers.

In an April 2011 Industrial Relations journal study, Allergretto, Dube, and Reich examined data for years 1999-2009: "Put simply, our findings indicated that minimum wage increases- in the range that have been implemented in the United States- *do not reduce employment among teens.*"

In a February 2013 Center for Economic Research study, John Schmitt wrote, "... two meta-studies analyzing the research conducted since the 1990's conclude that *the minimum wage has little or no discernable effect on the employment prospects of low-wage workers.*"

Sen. Thompson also said that employers near neighboring states would have a difficult time competing.

Dube, Lester, and Reich published a 2010 study in the Review of Economic Statistics that compared 16 years of data for 318 pairs of bordering counties. The authors found "no detectable employment losses from the kind of minimum wage increases we have seen in the United States."

Our legislators should know which workers would be affected.

According to a Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development December 2013 article, raising the minimum wage to \$9.50 per hour would affect 460,000 jobs. Occupations to be affected include cashiers, child care workers, maids and housekeepers, production work helpers, desk clerks, home health aides, lifeguards, and teacher assistants.

It is disappointing that Senator Thompson fails to support workers who perform critical functions for our economy and ignores solid research that challenges his mistaken beliefs.