

Higher Minimum Wage Helps Poor Buy Food, Shoes

There is an insidious movement underway in New Mexico, one that clear thinking state citizens need to reverse. Now.

It's time to take to the streets and demand our traditional values be maintained, that our fixture atop the lists of one of the poorest states in the nation be cemented.

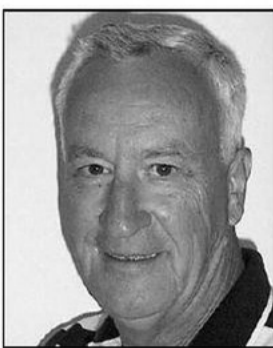
The latest battleground against poverty is being waged in Santa Fe where our state legislators are threatening to increase the minimum wage. The cities of Santa Fe and Albuquerque focused attention on the issue by waging their own campaigns to increase the minimum.

A different minimum in different cities is a bad idea. This is state business and, once raised to the legislative arena, citizens are empow-

ered to put pressure on their delegates to put the brakes on it.

The basic theory seems to be that the workers who greet us at the big box store, or sell us a soda at the all-night convenience market, or serve our food at restaurants should themselves have the right to be able to afford food and a roof over their heads.

And it doesn't stop there. Many of these greedy people actually



Looking Askance

By Ned Cantwell

want to be able to buy a car and fill it with gas. Sounds a bit like communism to me.

Stirring this Karl Marx pot is New Mexico Voices for Children that claims the federal estimate of 15 percent of families in New Mexico living in poverty is low by a half. Its study, "Bare Bones Budget," surveyed 52 New Mexico communities and declared that actually 30 percent of our families, 281,000 of them, live in poverty.

The study hit home with Lt. Gov. Diane Denish. She chairs the Children's Cabinet and Mortgage Finance authority, and said the Bare Bones Budget study would definitely impact policy making.

More than a quarter million families living in poverty? Well, big old deal. Didn't these folks ever hear

about U-Haul? Rent a trailer and get on out of here.

In conjunction with The New Mexicans For a Fair Wage Coalition, Voices released yet another study that shows steady job growth and reduced poverty in 14 states that have increased minimum wages above the federal level.

Unfortunately, Santa Fe is listening to this balderdash. Governor Bill Richardson wants the New Mexico minimum wage gradually increased from \$5.15 to \$7.50 by 2009. House Speaker Ben Lujan is going him one better. Lujan wants the minimum raised to \$7.50 immediately.

Just what the new level will be hotly debated, but all signs point to a higher wage level by the time the Legislature adjourns.

The problem with this, of course, is that it puts a huge burden on the business owner who now must cut costs by buying the entry level Lexus 300 ES instead of the fancier Lexus GS he had his heart set on.

Okay, that was a cheap shot by one of the great cheap shot artists. There are many rich business owners, but there are thousands of business owners who are barely paying the light bill. So what will happen to them if the minimum is raised?

They will raise their prices. You and I will pay for it. Ouch. But the alternative is to turn our backs on the less fortunate. And that is unacceptable.

(Ned Cantwell -ncantwell@charter.net -- is a syndicated New Mexico columnist.)

The gall of raising minimum wage

There is an insidious movement underway in New Mexico, one that clear-thinking state citizens need to reverse. Now.

It's time to take to the streets and demand our traditional values be maintained, that our fixture atop the lists of one of the poorest states in the nation be cemented.

The latest battleground against poverty is being waged in Santa Fe where our legislators are threatening to increase the minimum wage. The cities of Santa Fe and Albuquerque focused attention on the issue by waging their own campaigns to increase the minimum.

A different minimum in different cities is a bad idea. This is state business and, once raised to the legislative arena, citizens are empowered to put pressure on their delegates to put on the brakes.

The basic theory seems to be that the workers who greet us at the big-box store, or sell us a soda at the all-night convenience market, or serve our food at restaurants should themselves have the right to be able to afford food and a roof over their heads.

And it doesn't stop there. Many of these greedy people actually want to be able to buy a car and fill it with gas. Sounds a bit like communism to me.

Stirring this Karl Marx pot is New Mexico Voices for Children that

claims the federal estimate of 15 percent of families in New Mexico living in poverty is low by a half. Its study, "Bare Bones Budget," surveyed 52 New Mexico communities and declared that actually 30 percent of our families, 281,000 of them, live in poverty.

The study hit home with Lt. Gov. Diane Denish.

She chairs the Children's Cabinet and Mortgage Finance authority, and said the Bare Bones Budget study would definitely impact policy making.

More than a quarter million families living in poverty? Well, big old deal. Didn't these folks ever hear about U-Haul? Rent a trailer and get on out of here.

In conjunction with The New Mexicans For a Fair Wage Coalition, Voices released yet another study that shows steady job growth and reduced poverty in 14 states that have increased minimum wages above the federal level.

Unfortunately, Santa Fe is listening



Looking Askance

Ned Cantwell

to this balderdash. Gov. Bill Richardson wants the New Mexico minimum wage gradually increased from \$5.15 to \$7.50 by 2009. House Speaker Ben Lujan is going him one better. Lujan wants the minimum raised to \$7.50 immediately.

Just what the new level will be hotly debated, but all signs point to a higher wage level by the time the Legislature adjourns.

The problem with this, of course, is that it puts a huge burden on the business owner who now must cut costs by buying the entry level Lexus 300 ES instead of the fancier Lexus

GS he had his heart set on.

OK, that was a cheap shot by one of the great cheap-shot artists. There are many rich business owners, but there are thousands of business owners who are barely paying the light bill. So what will happen to them if the minimum is raised?

They will raise their prices. You and I will pay for it. Ouch. But the alternative is to turn our backs on the less fortunate. And that is unacceptable.

NED CANTWELL, a former publisher of the *Carlsbad Current Argus*, is a syndicated New Mexico columnist. Reach him at ncantwell@charter.net.

Battle against poverty needs your help

There is an insidious movement under way in New Mexico, one that clear-thinking state citizens need to reverse. Now.

It's time to take to the streets and demand our traditional values be maintained, that our fixture atop the lists of one of the poorest states in the nation be cemented.

The latest battleground against poverty is being waged in Santa Fe where our state legislators are threatening to increase the minimum wage. The cities of Santa Fe and Albuquerque focused attention on the issue by waging their own campaigns to increase the minimum.

A different minimum in different cities is a bad idea. This is state business and, once raised to the legislative arena, citizens are empowered to put pressure on their delegates to put the brakes on it.

The basic theory seems to be that the workers who greet us at the big box store, or sell us a soda at the all-night convenience market, or serve our food at restaurants



**Ned
Cantwell**
◆
State Columnist

should themselves have the right to be able to afford food and a roof over their heads.

And it doesn't stop there. Many of these greedy people actually want to be able to buy a car and fill it with gas. Sounds a bit like communism to me.

Stirring this Karl Marx pot is New Mexico Voices for Children that claims the federal estimate of 15 percent of families in New Mexico living in poverty is low by a half. Its study, "Bare Bones Budget," surveyed 52 New Mexico communities and declared that actually 30 percent of our families, 281,000 of them, live in poverty.

The study hit home with Lt.

Gov. Diane Denish. She chairs the Children's Cabinet and Mortgage Finance authority, and said the Bare Bones Budget study would definitely impact policy making.

More than a quarter million families living in poverty? Well, big old deal. Didn't these folks ever hear about U-Haul? Rent a trailer and get on out of here.

In conjunction with The New Mexicans For a Fair Wage Coalition, Voices released yet another study that shows steady job growth and reduced poverty in 14 states that have increased minimum wages above the federal level.

Unfortunately, Santa Fe is listening to this balderdash. Gov. Bill Richardson wants the New Mexico minimum wage gradually increased from \$5.15 to \$7.50 by 2009. House Speaker Ben Lujan is going him one better. Lujan wants the minimum raised to \$7.50 immediately.

Just what the new level will be is hotly debated, but all signs point to

a higher wage level by the time the Legislature adjourns.

The problem with this, of course, is that it puts a huge burden on the business owner who now must cut costs by buying the entry level Lexus 300 ES instead of the fancier Lexus GS he had his heart set on.

OK, that was a cheap shot by one of the great cheap shot artists. There are many rich business owners, but there are thousands of business owners who are barely paying the light bill. So what will happen to them if the minimum is raised?

They will raise their prices. You and I will pay for it. Ouch. But the alternative is to turn our backs on the less fortunate. And that is unacceptable.

Ned Cantwell of Ruidoso is a retired newspaper publisher and member of the New Mexico Press Association Hall of Fame. E-mail him at:

ncantwell@charter.net

Raising minimum wage would hurt state's bad reputation

There is an insidious movement underway in New Mexico, one that clear thinking state citizens need to reverse. Now.

It's time to take to the streets and demand our traditional values be maintained, that our future atop the lists of one of the poorest states in the nation be cemented.

The latest battleground against poverty is being waged in Santa Fe where our state legislators are threatening to increase the minimum wage.

The cities of Santa Fe and Albuquerque focused attention on the issue by waging their own campaigns to increase the minimum.

A different minimum in different cities is a bad idea. This is state business and, once raised to the legislative arena, citizens are empowered to put pressure on their delegates to put the brakes on it.

The basic theory seems to be that the workers who greet us at the big box store, or sell us a soda at the all-night convenience market, or serve our food at restaurants should themselves have the right to be able to afford food and a roof over their heads.

And it doesn't stop there. Many of

these greedy people actually want to be able to buy a car and fill it with gas.

Sounds a bit like communism to me.

Stirring this Karl Marx pot is New Mexico Voices for Children that claims the federal estimate of 15 percent of families in New Mexico living in poverty is low by a half. Its study, "Bare Bones Budget," surveyed 52 New Mexico communities and declared that actually 30 percent of our families, 281,000 of them, live in poverty.

The study hit home with Lt. Gov. Diane Denish. She chairs the Children's Cabinet and Mortgage Finance authority, and said the Bare Bones Budget study would definitely impact policy making.

More than a quarter million families living in poverty? Well, big old deal. Didn't these folks ever hear about U-Haul? Rent a trailer and get on out of here.

In conjunction with The New Mexicans For a Fair Wage Coalition, Voices released yet another study that shows steady job growth and reduced poverty in 14 states that have increased minimum wages above the federal level.



LOOKING
ASKANCE
NED CANTWELL

Unfortunately, Santa Fe is listening to this balderdash. Governor Bill Richardson wants the New Mexico minimum wage gradually increased from \$5.15 to \$7.50 by 2009. House Speaker Ben Lujan is going him one better. Lujan wants the minimum raised to \$7.50 immediately.

Just what the new level will be hotly debated, but all signs point to a higher wage level by the time the Legislature adjourns.

The problem with this, of course, is that it puts a huge burden on the business owner who now must cut costs by buying the entry level Lexus 300 ES instead of the fancier Lexus GS he had his heart set on.

Okay, that was a cheap shot by one of the great cheap shot artists. There are many rich business owners, but there are thousands of business owners who are barely paying the light bill. So what will happen to them if the minimum is raised?

They will raise their prices. You and I will pay for it. Ouch. But the alternative is to turn our backs on the less fortunate. And that is unacceptable.

*Ned Cantwell (ncantwell@charter.net)
is a syndicated New Mexico columnist.*