

## **KC for \$15 Script**

**Caller:** Hi, is this \_\_\_?

**Voter:** Yes.

**Caller:** Hi, this is \_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_. I'm calling to remind you that your voice and vote matter. Do you know about the special election in Kansas City, Missouri, on Tuesday, August 8th?

**Voter:** Yes/No

**Caller:** There is going to be a special election on August 8th, 2017 in Kansas City, Missouri, and one of the most important questions on the ballot will be Question 3, which asks whether or not Kansas City should raise its minimum wage to \$15/hour.

We are asking everyone to vote yes on this question. The current minimum wage in Missouri is \$7.70/hr, which is way too low for working people to meet their basic needs, especially if they have families to support.

Can we count on you to vote yes on Question 3?

**Voter:** No, because \_\_\_\_\_

**Caller:** I can understand your viewpoint. However, (see list of rebuttals below)

**Voter:** Yes!

**Caller:** Wonderful. Thank you so much for voting and for taking the time to talk to me. Please tell your family and friends in KCMO to also vote Yes on 3 on August 8. Have a great day!

Election Info

<https://www.kceb.org/elections/>

Poll Locations

<https://www.kceb.org/elections/poll-locations/>

## Talking Points

### Three main reasons why it's important to raise the minimum wage:

1. All Kansas Citizens should have the ability to financially provide for themselves and their families.
2. A higher minimum wage would mean more money in Kansas City coffers, which would enable the city to undertake more projects that would benefit the entire city.
3. A higher minimum wage would mean a stronger, more vibrant economy in Kansas City.

### MO Legislature

#### **Didn't the Missouri Legislature just forbid cities from raising their minimum wages?**

The bill that would do so is on Governor Eric Greitens' desk. While the chances of him vetoing it are slim, Kansas City's new living wage would take effect before the ban. A legal battle may follow, but it is one we can win. But first we must vote YES on Question 3 on August 8.

### Deserving

#### **People who flip burgers or stock shelves don't deserve \$15/hour.**

No matter what work they do, all workers deserve a wage that will support themselves and their families. No one should have to choose between paying for rent and paying for groceries. In Kansas City, over 45% of workers earn less than \$15 an hour.<sup>1</sup> That's a lot of people who are struggling to pay the bills -- and *they deserve a living wage because they are people.*

### Lower Employment

#### **Doesn't raising the minimum wage lead to lower employment?**

Looking at the 22 federal minimum wage raises since 1938 shows no correlation between minimum wage increases and lower employment levels. Employment actually *increased* after 68% of minimum wage raises.<sup>2</sup>

### Higher Prices

#### **Doesn't raising the minimum wage cause skyrocketing prices?**

One year after Seattle raised its minimum wage to \$15 per hour in 2015, prices in the city remained the same compared to surrounding areas. This despite the fact that 62% of businesses surveyed before the wage increase promised they would raise prices.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> KSHB Channel 41 in Kansas City,

<http://www.kshb.com/news/local-news/the-face-of-minimum-wage-what-families-need-to-live>

<sup>2</sup> National Employment Law Project,

<http://www.nelp.org/publication/raise-wages-kill-jobs-no-correlation-minimum-wage-increases-employment-levels/>

<sup>3</sup> Seattle Post-Intelligencer,

<http://www.seattlepi.com/local/politics/article/Early-UW-study-of-15-wage-law-Seattle-has-not-7255658.php>

## **Employment Effects**

### **But WHY doesn't it hurt employment or raise prices?**

Someone earning \$7.70/hour (the current Missouri minimum wage) doesn't have any disposable income to spend. But when workers have more money in their pockets, they spend it at businesses. More money in the hands of consumers boosts the economy -- benefiting all Kansas Citizens. This is why we don't see mass unemployment or skyrocketing prices after minimum wage raises. It's a system that balances out.

Workers having more money in their pockets also means more tax money in the city coffers for making Kansas City an even better place to live.

## **Government Assistance**

### **People making the current minimum wage must be living on their wages somehow, right?**

Not without help. Families want to be able to support themselves, not rely on government assistance. Yet 52% of low-wage fast food workers need it to make ends meet.<sup>4</sup> A living wage means less demand on all taxpayers (all families and businesses) for public assistance.

## **Other Professions**

### **Doesn't raising the minimum wage decrease the prestige of other jobs, like teaching?**

There are many skilled professions, like teaching and social work, that also pay too little. Instead of pitting various underpaid groups against each other, we should work together to support raises for multiple professions. Low wages in one line of work don't justify low wages in another. All workers are people, and all people deserve a living wage.

## **Age of Workers**

### **Why should teenagers be making the same wage as adults supporting families?**

Some teenagers earning the minimum wage actually *are* supporting their families -- or saving for college. And even though some teenagers have these jobs just to earn spending money, it is unjust to hold back other minimum wage workers struggling to pay the bills because of them. In any case, what's most important is the work being done, not the age of the employee.

In reality, nearly 90% of workers who would benefit from a minimum wage raise are over 20.<sup>5</sup> This includes many workers with college credits and college degrees. There are not always enough high-paying jobs available, even for college graduates.

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<sup>4</sup> Al Jazeera America, <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2013/10/15/report-more-thanhalfofusfastfoodworkersneedpublicassistance.html>

<sup>5</sup> Economic Policy Institute, <http://www.epi.org/publication/bp357-federal-minimum-wage-increase/>, <https://thinkprogress.org/half-a-million-people-with-college-degrees-are-working-for-minimum-wage-4a2d86ea7775>

### **Competition for Jobs**

**They can help themselves. The talented, hardworking ones will go to college or become managers soon enough.**

Not everyone has the time or money to go to college, and not everyone does well in school -- yet everyone still has to provide for themselves and their families. And in the vicious competition for jobs, hard work may lead to a promotion or a better paying job, but there are no guarantees of that. For every hard worker who “gets in,” there are many more equally hard workers who will inevitably get left behind. Management jobs are few, non-management jobs are many. If everyone could become managers, there would be no one left to manage!

### **Speed of Change**

**I support a higher wage, but jumping to \$15 an hour is too drastic and too fast.**

This ballot measure will raise KC’s minimum wage to \$10 right away and will gradually increase it to \$15 by 2022. In general, however, the value of the federal minimum wage has been eroded by decades of inaction, so our main goal now is simply to get it to catch up. If the federal minimum wage had grown with average wages, it would now be \$11.35/hour, and if it had kept up with average wages AND productivity, it would now be \$18.85/hour.<sup>6</sup> Plus, the minimum wage is only indexed for inflation in 18 states and D.C., meaning that in all other states there is the possibility for its buying power to erode.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Economic Policy Institute, <http://www.epi.org/publication/the-federal-minimum-wage-has-been-eroded-by-decades-of-inaction/>

<sup>7</sup> Economic Policy Institute, <http://www.epi.org/minimum-wage-tracker/>