

# MINIMUM WAGE

## RAISING THE BAR FOR ALBERTA'S LOWEST-PAID WORKERS

Working hard should lift people out of poverty — not trap them there. But for years, the lowest-paid Albertans were earning a minimum wage that, even for full-time work, kept them below the poverty line.

Today, though, Alberta has the highest minimum wage in Canada. It's something to be proud of, and something worth protecting.

A higher minimum wage means less demand on social services. It means more families who aren't living in poverty. And it means more money going into our local economies, where low-income workers spend nearly all of their earnings.

### WHAT'S AT STAKE?

In 2015, Alberta was tied for the lowest minimum wage in Canada. But as soon as they were elected, Rachel Notley and the Alberta NDP began raising it steadily. And this October, it rose to \$15 an hour, the highest in the country.

Right-wing lobbyists predicted job losses in the tens of thousands but exactly the opposite happened. The sectors of our economy with the most minimum-wage jobs actually increased employment by 25,000 jobs.

What minimum wage critics don't understand is that most of Alberta's more than 300,000 minimum-wage earners aren't teenagers. Three-quarters are 20 or over. 4 in 10 are parents, whose kids rely on their income.

In this election, we're asking HSAA members and all Albertans to make health care a priority. Ensuring that everyone can earn a decent wage that helps lift families out of poverty is a big part of that.

## WHERE DO THE PARTIES STAND?

While neither main party has released their election platform, we can learn a lot from their public statements, and from their records.



### JASON KENNEY AND THE UCP



### RACHEL NOTLEY AND THE NDP



## A FAIR MINIMUM WAGE

#### AGAINST.

Would freeze the minimum wage, so its real value falls as inflation erodes it.

Opposed minimum wage increases.

Fear-mongered about job losses that never materialized.

Supports a minimum wage system where young people and adults with disabilities get paid less.

#### FOR.

Raised the minimum wage steadily from \$10.20/hour to \$15, giving a raise to more than 300,000 low-income Albertans

Helped small businesses adjust by reducing the Small Business Tax by one-third

Knows a higher minimum wage can help reduce poverty, lessen the burden on social support programs, and improve the quality of life for vulnerable people

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

### HOW DO WE ENSURE A DECENT WAGE FOR LOW-PAID WORKERS?

There's a very clear choice in the next election. Jason Kenney's UCP would start eroding the minimum wage and potentially split it up so some workers earn even less. Rachel Notley's NDP is committed to continuing Alberta's progress, so our minimum wage becomes a living wage.

That's important for all workers, not just those earning the least. A higher minimum wage helps boost the wages above it, too. And with more money going into local economies, and less demand on our services, it means a more prosperous Alberta for all of us.

This election, let's choose a government that will protect the progress Alberta has made — and keep working toward an economy that works for all of us.



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