



Raising the minimum wage would only hurt employees

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Anyone who has worked a minimum wage job knows it's not the best job in the world. But what do you get out of working one of these jobs? You get work experience. You learn to be a responsible person by being somewhere on time and being in charge of certain tasks.

Minimum wage jobs should be more geared toward teenagers and college students trying to gain some experience for when they try to get a job in their chosen profession, not men and women trying to support a family.

In 2012, 3.6 million workers were paid hourly with wages at or below the federal minimum of \$7.25. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, these workers make up only 4.7 percent of all workers who get paid hourly.

A higher minimum wage would reduce employment opportunities for the most of us, according to Forbes.com. "When you raise the minimum wage, people increase the amount of labor they are willing to supply while reducing the amount of labor they demand."

"The important thing for policymakers to remember is that a decision to increase the minimum wage is not cost-free; someone has to pay for it," says an article on the Cato Institute's website.

Forbes makes a similar point. "What is the 'right' combination of wages, benefits, and working conditions? That's a question with no right answer, and the intuitive answer—'higher, better, and more pleasant'—is unhelpful because it assumes that higher wages, better benefits, and more pleasant working conditions are a free lunch."

"The higher the minimum wage relative to competitive-market wage levels, the greater the employment loss that occurs," says the Cato Institute.

While minimum wages aim to improve the economic well being of the working poor, the effects of minimum wages have been found to fall disproportionately on the least skilled and on the most disadvantaged individuals. That includes the disabled, youth, lower-skilled workers, immigrants, and ethnic minorities.

"Employers who are forced to pay higher wages have reduced incentives to keep their employees happy," says Forbes. "One of the beautiful facts about the free market is that it allows people to

explore a range of possibilities and find the combinations of wages, benefits, and working conditions that are right for them at a particular point in time.”

A minimum wage job may not be fun, but it’s not supposed to be. It should be used as a stepping stone to something better.