

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

No Simon Legree at Ron McDonald's

Stephen Moore (["Unions Cast Ronald McDonald as Simon Legree,"](#) Cross Country, Aug. 17) correctly notes that "nations don't create high-wage jobs through government fiat" and that imposing "living wage" laws on fast-food restaurants and big-box retailers will lead to fewer jobs as entrepreneurs switch to labor-saving production methods and close marginal operations. He could have also pointed out that when legislators bend to union and special-interest pressure to raise the minimum wage or impose super-minimum wages, economic and personal freedom are sacrificed.

A free society requires a rule of law that limits government power and maximizes individual freedom. No one is forcing workers to take jobs at [McDonald's](#) or Wal-Mart. They are doing so because they are better off than in their next best alternative. When union organizers block access to a fast-food restaurant or a retailer, they deprive other individuals of their rights, impede civil society and violate informal codes of conduct. If public authorities stand by and allow protesters to interrupt normal business, they dodge their responsibility to protect persons and property. Police, as members of public employee unions, may sympathize with the protesters, but their primary duty should be to ensure that those who run legal businesses and their customers are free to exercise their rights to voluntary exchange.

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