

LAS CRUCES SUN-NEWS

Data contradict columns opposing minimum wage

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Recently there have been columns in both local papers disparaging the Las Cruces minimum wage. It seems to me that if every business is paying the same rate, then they should all be on an equal playing field. However, in 2011, The Center for Economic and Policy Research published a study of wage increases in Santa Fe, San Francisco and Washington, D.C.

They stated: “The citywide minimum wages can raise the earnings of low-wage workers without discernible impact on their employment.” They further stated, “Our estimated employment responses generally cluster near zero, and are more likely to be positive than negative.” The center has published several follow-up studies confirming these conclusions. Funny how this contradicts Dr. Aaron Yelowitz, who is associated with the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank espousing limited government and free markets.

In a Sun-News article, Joanne. Ray of The Main Street Bistro cited slow economy, competition, the conversion of Church and Water streets and the minimum wage increase (in that order) as reasons for closing. Sital says the reason they closed was a business decision, and recently added 200 new jobs in Albuquerque where the minimum wage is 40 cents an hour lower. Probably not the reason they closed here.

The owners of Lorenzo’s and Coas Books both testified in opposition to the minimum wage before the City Council, so they may have cut jobs to prove they were right. Other, perhaps more successful businesses, such as Dion’s are adding staff, and just opened a second location in Las Cruces. Daddy O’s is based in El Paso, and the economy may be doing better there. I tend to believe that our most vulnerable should not have to work multiple jobs to feed their families, and that employers generally find better-compensated employees to be more loyal and productive.