



Questions for All-Candidates Meetings

1. Why is it ok that Gordon Campbell gave himself a 54 percent wage increase but won't raise the minimum wage even a penny?
2. BC is the only province in Canada that didn't raise the minimum wage last year. Governments across Canada, from Ontario to Newfoundland, are increasing the minimum wage as a part of their poverty reduction strategy. BC has the highest level of child poverty. If BC wants to tackle poverty head on, isn't it time to raise the minimum wage?
3. How much longer do BC's lowest-paid workers have to wait before they see an increase to the minimum wage?
4. Tuition costs have gone up. Transit fares have gone up. Housing and food costs have gone up. Why has there been no increase to BC's minimum wage?
5. Why are MLAs guaranteed a raise to keep up with cost of living increases, but minimum wage workers aren't?

**The Real Facts
behind the BC Liberals
Refusal to
Increase the
Minimum Wage**



The real facts behind the Liberals refusal to increase the minimum wage

Gordon Campbell and the Liberals say: Increasing the minimum wage to \$10 would increase costs to small business by \$450 million.

The reality: The Liberals claim the BC Chamber of Commerce as their source for this figure, although now the Chamber is denying this. Though, make no mistake there has never been a time Chamber President, John Winter, and his business coalition friends have supported an increase to the minimum wage.

Not all small businesses are minimum wage employers, (in fact, in 2007, 58 percent of BC small businesses consisted of self-employed individuals, with no additional paid employees), these figures also include corporations like Walmart, McDonalds, and many other large retail and service operations.

Mark Startup, from the Retail BC, noted that regarding the minimum wage. "It's actually not an issue for the [3,000] members of Retail BC"

Gordon Campbell and the Liberals say: a 25 percent increase in the minimum wage could result in BC losing over 50,000 jobs.

The reality: The Campbell Liberals are citing a study prepared by Morley Gunderson, in 2007, for the province of Ontario. Ontario reviewed that study and all of the other evidence and decided to increase the minimum wage to \$9.50, and have scheduled a future increase for May 10, 2010, that would increase it to \$10.25. There is no evidence in Ontario that increasing the minimum wage, increased job losses.

On a global scale, a 2007 OECD report points out that higher minimum wages lead to higher productivity.

What do BC economists say?

David Green, UBC Professor of Economics: "The sort of no-

tion that if you raise the price of labour, everything just is gonna go downhill is not true. If you make some of these adjustments, firms will make adjustments. They'll change the way they produce."

Mark Thompson, UBC Professor of Business: "Usually there's a slight advantage to the workers as a group by having the higher wages -- more than offsetting the loss of jobs."

More importantly, what does recent evidence show us in BC? In 2001, when Campbell cut the minimum wage to \$6 for new workers, youth unemployment increased. Today, while BC also has Canada's lowest minimum wage, we also are facing some of Canada's highest job loss. The Liberal argument doesn't add up.

Gordon Campbell and the Liberals say: It's mostly teenagers who are paid the minimum wage; they live at home and don't need a raise.

The reality: In 2007, 293,100 British Columbia workers earned \$10 per hour or less, (including 62,600 workers who earned the \$8.00 minimum wage.) Only one-third of these workers are teenagers, two-thirds are over the age of 19. More than 60 percent of these workers are female.

