



# **Rep. Bourne opposes \$15 minimum wage hike**

February 18 2019 11:01 AM



LITCHFIELD - Just two weeks into session, Illinois Democrats passed an 82% minimum wage hike that will eliminate job opportunities and cost Illinois taxpayers at least \$1 billion annually once it is fully implemented. Assistant House Minority Leader Representative Avery Bourne (R-Raymond) voted no on the legislation and issued the following statement about her vote:

“This costly legislation was rammed through the Legislature at the urging of Governor Pritzker, who wanted a legislative ‘win’ to highlight during his first Budget Address next week. Even worse, Democrats shut out Republicans and the small business community from the negotiating process and ignored our concerns. That is no way to govern,” said Bourne. She added, “Increasing spending and making our state even more hostile to small business will have huge consequences for years to come. We need to get our spending under control and pass policies that will help create new, good-paying jobs. Instead, Democrats in the majority continue to increase spending, pass new regulations on small businesses, and propose new tax increases. Those policies will hurt our state and our residents. The people of Illinois cannot afford that.”

When signed into law by Governor Pritzker, the legislation would raise the state’s minimum wage from \$8.25 to \$15 dollars per hour over the next six years. The minimum wage in Central Illinois would be the same as the City of Chicago and the highest in the nation.

The change is expected to take a massive toll on businesses, non-profits, and local units of government, such as schools, as well. Estimates placed the cost of the wage increase at over \$1 billion for state government. That estimate does not include costs local units of government, such as school or park districts, counties, villages, and others would face.

According to several schools in the area, the wage hike will likely result in layoffs for teachers’ aids and other positions, which will negatively affect in-classroom learning. It will also increase pressures for local governments to absorb those costs by raising property taxes. Universities will face tens of millions of dollars in new costs with the potential student employee layoffs. In addition, a number of social service providers have said they may be forced to lay off staff or cut services as well.

Small business groups attempted to voice their concerns over the 82% minimum wage increase, but were ignored during discussions on the legislation. They, along with Republican lawmakers, were pushing for a regionalization amendment that would allow for a lower minimum wage rate outside Chicago. Unfortunately, no amendment was added because Governor Pritzker and Democratic lawmakers were unwilling to compromise. The bill passed the Illinois House of Representatives with only Democratic support and now awaits Governor Pritzker’s signature to become law.