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really compelled to share with you some of the correspondence that I have received in regard to this matter. I too, I just want to say, have compassion for small businesses. I do think that they are the lifeblood of our state. I think Senator Cunningham, his personal experiences are...he has just been sharing with us some of the correspondence that I have also received that shares the same kinds of thoughts. I have an e-mail from one of my businesses that's located about 10 miles from me in a community of about 350: This is to voice my opposition to the new minimum wage increase. It is difficult enough to make it in a small business like ours without having to put out more on forced wages. We already pay top wages for the job, and pay above minimum for those that earn it. We need to be able to make this move on our own. It is time to help small businesses and small towns. Thank you for your time and please oppose this increase at this time. Another one from the York area, a businessperson: I'm very concerned about the effort to increase our state minimum wage and want to openly express my opposition to it. I'm a small business owner. Our location in York has been struggling with increased costs and decreased or flat sales for most of the last five years. Any increase in the minimum wage will have a huge impact on our ability to remain profitable without passing on corresponding price increases for the products we sell. In the end, it's bad economic policy to consider at this time. I can assure you that most employees will expect any increase in the minimum wage to have a ratchet effect on their wages, putting pressure on all employers to raise wages. At a time with a fragile economy throughout our state, this is bad economic policy for small business owners. I urge you to vote against any efforts to increase the state minimum wage. Another letter: There are only so many dollars available to spend on labor. Price increases in this competitive environment are out of the question. In conclusion, I hope you will agree that this bill will do nothing to improve the lives of those who are currently working full-time in our industry, but will actually do harm to those who will not get the opportunity to take their first positive employment step. Another one: To require small businesses to raise wages to higher levels of a government mandate will require price increases in very tough times, which will be inflationary, and I think that was discussed yesterday, not to mention the impact on