

TO: _____(Input State Rep's name)

FROM: _____(Input your name)

RE: Teen/Training Wage to Encourage Summer Hiring and Youth Hiring

Date: _____, 2019 (Input Date)

As the minimum wage increases, it becomes far more difficult for my small business to employ younger and unskilled workers. In fact, studies have shown as the minimum wage increases, fewer hours and jobs become available for young workers.

To help encourage youth employment, 39 states have implemented a teen/training wage. This is often a percentage of the minimum wage that employers are allowed to pay younger workers for a finite period of time (usually 80% of the minimum wage for 3 months). This often helps small businesses hire younger workers for the summer months and provide much-needed job training for those entering the workforce.

Massachusetts is 1 of only 11 states that does not offer a teen/training wage, discouraging employers from hiring workers that often need to be taught employment soft skills like showing up on time, how to dress for work and other basic skills. A recent Worcester Telegram article reported on the problem faced by Massachusetts employers to offer summer jobs as the state minimum wage climbs to \$15 per hour.

As a small business owner in your district, I urge you to support efforts to enact a teen/training wage in Massachusetts. Massachusetts small businesses often served as the entrance into the workforce for many young workers. However, businesses like mine struggle to hire young workers as labor costs rise. We are mandated to pay high wages, paid sick time and paid family and medical leave, even for teen workers.

Employing younger workers often requires a great deal of training. Small businesses help young workers learn basic job skills like: how to earn and save money, how to communicate in face to face interactions and how to address customers. Those vital employment soft skills are often lost if teens are unable to gain initial experience in a first job.

Many Massachusetts communities who are reliant upon tourism will also benefit from a teen wage during the summer months or ski season. These small restaurants and amusement businesses historically employ younger workers but struggle as labor costs rise.

Once again, as a small business owner in your district, I strongly urge you to support legislation enacting a teen/training wage in the Commonwealth. We must join 39 other states with a teen/training wage and motivate Massachusetts employers to once again hire younger workers.

Sincerely

_____(Sign your Name)

(type in business name & town in which your business is located)