

HOUSE BILL 492
Testimony of Teamsters Local 190
House Business & Labor Committee – February 2, 2007

“Revising the minimum wage for employees who customarily receive tips or gratuities in their employment”

Introduced by Representative Dennis Himmelberger

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, for the record my name is Don Judge and I'm submitting this testimony today on behalf of Teamsters Local 190 in opposition to House Bill 492. I apologize to the committee for not being able to attend, but business interests required me to be out of town today.

Teamsters Local 190 doesn't represent any employees who customarily receive tips or gratuities, but our members do spend money in places where this is common practice. And, our members, if they parallel the average Montana voter, voted overwhelmingly to increase Montana's minimum wage.

As such, when our members dine out or enjoy an evening of visiting with coworkers, family or friends in one of Montana's friendly restaurants or taverns, they expect that the workers who serve their meals and beverages will be enjoying the fruits of their support to increase Montana's minimum wage. And, they expect that the tips they leave for their servers will go either directly to the individual workers, or be shared with the cooks, dishwashers and bus-workers who normally don't interface directly with the customers.

Our members certainly don't believe that the tips they leave are going to be used to offset any future increase in the minimum wages paid to workers in Montana. That's what HB 492, as introduced, would do. For this one class of workers, those who may or may not receive tips of any substantial amount, it would say that in any future increase in the minimum wage, whether by the state or federal government, the value of tips could offset a portion of the increase.

Frankly, we believe that this bill represents sour grapes for the opponents of increasing the state's minimum wage. Montanans overwhelmingly voted to increase the minimum wage and to index future increases to the cost of living. We don't think that this legislature should tamper with the will of Montanans on this important issue.

We encourage the committee go table HB 492. Thank you

Respectfully submitted



Don Judge

Teamsters Local 190