



## Dozens gather in Mountain Brook to protest bill blocking Birmingham minimum wage hike

Jon Reed | [jreed@al.com](mailto:jreed@al.com) By Jon Reed | [jreed@al.com](mailto:jreed@al.com)

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Supporters of a higher minimum wage gathered in Mountain Brook Village Tuesday to protest a bill by one state lawmaker to block Birmingham's wage hike.

Dozens chanted and marched in suburban Mountain Brook because it's the home of Republican state Rep. David Faulkner, who proposed **a bill to prevent cities from setting a minimum wage for private employers**. It came after **the Birmingham City Council voted to raise the minimum wage** in the city to \$8.50 in July 2016 and \$10.10 in July 2017.

Faulkner has said raising the minimum wage would lead to job elimination and would hurt businesses, and that the state needs to have uniform wage laws, instead of a patchwork of different laws.

The protesters Tuesday said the decision should be left up to the cities. They carried signs calling for local control.

"We wouldn't dare tell Mountain Brook that their tax rates should be the same as everyone else, would we?" said Doug Hoffman, a member of Engage Alabama and one of the organizers.

Hoffman said raising the minimum wage would be good for local economies because people who don't make much money spend more of their income locally, while wealthier people often invest it or spend it elsewhere.

"We'd love to get a statewide minimum wage but it's probably not going to happen with the Republican-controlled state legislature, so we're going city-to-city," he said.

Le'Darius Hilliard, president of Jefferson County Young Democrats, said Faulkner's bill would hurt the working class.

"We don't know why he wants to hurt the lower-income cities," he said.

Antonio Jenkins said \$7.25 an hour -- the federal minimum wage that applies to Alabamians because the state doesn't have a minimum wage law -- isn't enough for families to live on.

"Any time you have to choose between bills and food, it would make more sense to raise the wage," he said.

Brittany Gore, the president of People First of Alabama, a self-advocacy group for people with developmental disabilities, said raising the minimum wage would be good for everyone.

"I think it should be up to the city's decision whether or not they should raise the minimum wage," she said.

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