

## **Is It Time for a Maximum Wage Law?**

*David Kulick*

Most of us support raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, which when adjusted for inflation is still below the original minimum wage law. Even so, that does put pressure on owners of a small number of fast food franchises because they cannot raise prices enough to offset the new wages. It even encourages large corporations to design robots that can reduce the number of workers by taking orders and preparing the food.

The real problem here is the concentration of wealth at the top and the failure of our capitalist system to provide a living wage. Rather than have to pass minimum wage laws, maybe we should tackle the wealth distribution inequality at the other end, and pass a maximum wage law. During the 1950s and early 1960s, the tax rate for the top bracket was over 90% and the economy was in very good shape.

What would a maximum wage law look like? A top tax rate of 95% would come very close to actually being a maximum wage law, and that is what we had, so perhaps that's all we need to do. However, the recent Republican tax bill accomplished exactly the opposite.

Is it fair to do this? Won't this stifle the desire to innovate and produce wealth? History shows that it doesn't, and the system is so skewed towards the wealthy that the income tax is just about the only way to move back towards some fairness. What is a reasonable amount of wealth that one person should be allowed to accumulate?

Are we really talking about an income tax, which is just about adding even more wealth to vast fortunes, or are we talking about a maximum wealth law? I think the latter. I think that things have already gone too far, and that it's time to seriously face the issue of some people having staggering fortunes while too many people lack sufficient food.

Wealth redistribution is a difficult subject, and perhaps it's best to stick with a maximum wage law. However, as we have just seen, the vast wealth of the big Republican donors pushed through a bill that did the opposite of what is needed. So, I really don't see a choice. The power of those huge fortunes is growing, and it's time to start a dialog on what we do about it.