



*Office of the Minister  
MLA, Edmonton - Mill Woods*

AR70082

June 20, 2017

Mr. Harry Gross  
President  
Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce  
200 Commerce House  
529 - 6 Street South  
Lethbridge, AB T1J 2E1

Dear Mr. Gross:

Thank you for your February 13, 2017 letter regarding the Government of Alberta's changes to minimum wage, and for sharing with me the policy recommendations as outlined by the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce. I apologize for the delay in responding. As Minister of Labour, I appreciate you providing information from your member survey and your input on minimum wage policy.

Our government was elected on a commitment to make work fairer by raising minimum wage so that regardless of the job they perform, people can earn enough to take care of themselves and their families. Some Albertans who earn minimum wage struggle to make ends meet. According to Food Banks Canada, nearly one-third of their Alberta clients are from working households, the highest among Canadian provinces.

Furthermore, our government believes that minimum wage has a significant impact on income equality for women and single parents. According to Statistics Canada, 215,300 women in Alberta earn \$15 per hour or less. More than 42,000 Albertans who earn that amount are single earners with children, 12,900 are the head of their household and 22,900 live with their parents.

In Alberta, the government expects the increased minimum wage to stimulate local economies. There are studies in Canada and the United States that show positive effects of raising minimum wage, including increased consumer spending, lower wage inequality and better health outcomes with little negative effect on overall employment levels. You can find out more about those studies at [www.alberta.ca/min-wage-research.aspx](http://www.alberta.ca/min-wage-research.aspx).

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With respect to the metrics recommended for monitoring by the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce, all of the noted items would also have been affected by the drop in global oil prices and other economic factors.

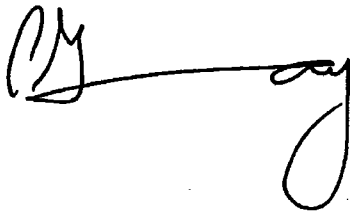
We have undertaken a number of measures to help small and medium-sized businesses during this economic downturn. They include reducing the small business tax by one third as part of the Climate Leadership Plan, investing \$250 million in a series of initiatives under the Alberta Jobs Plan including two new tax credits, opening the Summer Temporary Employment Program to small business and increasing access to capital by making \$2 billion available through Alberta Treasury Branches and the Alberta Investment Management Corporation.

As you are aware, the government recently passed Bill 17, the *Fair and Family-friendly Workplaces Act*, which amends employment standards to ensure they are more flexible, family-friendly and reflect the needs of modern workplaces. Feedback was received from Albertans through an online survey posted on our website, in-person sessions, and written submissions. I would like to thank the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce for their written submission and participation in the in-person session.

I appreciate the concerns you have expressed as well as the recommendations that the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce has outlined in the attached letter.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christina Gray', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Christina Gray  
Minister of Labour  
Responsible for Democratic Renewal

cc: Honourable Shannon Phillips  
MLA for Lethbridge - West

Maria Fitzpatrick  
MLA for Lethbridge - East