|  |
| --- |
| Annotate the articles with at least five notes that show evidence of understanding and thinking. |

**Fast-food protesters want minimum wage increase on front burner**

By Associated Press, adapted by Newsela staff, November 24, 2015

NEW YORK, N.Y. — Workers from McDonald's, Taco Bell and other fast-food restaurant chains protested in cities around the country Tuesday. They gathered to demand that fast-food companies pay them at least $15 an hour. The protesters also had a message for presidential candidates: Support the cause or lose their vote next year.

The protests were part of an ongoing campaign called "Fight for $15." The larger goal of that campaign is to get the nationwide minimum wage raised to $15 an hour for all low-wage employees.

The fast-food protests took place in more than 270 cities nationwide. Janitors, nursing home workers and package delivery workers also joined some protests.

Dominique McCrae, who serves fried chicken and biscuits at a Bojangles' restaurant for $7.55 an hour, joined a protest outside a McDonald's in Durham, North Carolina. Her pay is not enough to cover rent or diapers for her child, the 23-year-old said. She dropped out of college to care for her grandfather, making finances tight.

**Candidates Tweet Their Support**

"We just want to be able to support our families," said McCrae, who has worked at Bojangles' for two months.

Bojangles' said in a statement that its wages compare favorably to what similar companies offer.

The "Fight for $15" campaign began about three years ago and is funded by the Service Employees International Union. The union represents low-wage workers. Several past protests were also staged outside fast-food restaurants.

This time workers are pledging not to vote for presidential candidates that do not support the campaign. Democratic candidates Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders each tweeted their support Tuesday. Sanders showed up at a protest outside the Senate in Washington.

**Some Say Wage Hikes Cost Jobs**

McDonald's worker Adriana Alvarez of Chicago said she plans to vote for the first time next year, but only for a candidate who wants to raise wages to $15 an hour. Alvarez, who is 23 said that she makes $10.50 an hour. Higher pay would help her move out of the moldy basement apartment she shares with her 3-year-old son.

"I can find a better place," she said.

In the retail, hotel and restaurant industries, average hourly pay for front-line workers is below $15. Front-line workers are the roughly 80 percent who are not managers or supervisors. It was $14.90 in the retail industry in October, the Labor Department said last week, and $13.82 for hotel employees. Restaurant workers, on average, earned $11.51 an hour.

Economists have long debated the impact of raising the minimum wage. Some have argued that wage hikes only end up hurting workers. They say the hikes force employers to let workers go, because they cannot afford to pay everyone the new higher wage. Recent research, however, has found that modest increases seldom cost many jobs.

However, a jump to $15 an hour would more than double the federal minimum of $7.25. Such a jump would be a much higher increase than anything economists have ever studied.

**Companies Cite Barrier To Wage Boosts**

McDonald's said in a statement Tuesday that wages at U.S. restaurants it owns increased $1 over the local minimum wage in July, affecting about 90,000 employees. However, the vast majority of U.S. McDonald's locations are independently operated, and thus wages are not set by the parent company.

Rival Burger King said it supports "the right to demonstrate." The company said it hopes "any demonstrators will respect the safety of our restaurant guests and employees." It also said that many of its restaurants are independently operated and that the owners of those restaurants make wage decisions, not the corporate company.

Yum Brands, the company behind Taco Bell and KFC, said its employees are paid above minimum wage. Yum Brands has 2,000 company-owned stores.

At a New York rally, a few hundred people cheered and clapped. Some carried signs saying, "Lift all boats, not just yachts."

Some at the rally were not fast-food workers. Liz Henry, 38, who works in environmental services at a New York hospital, makes more than $15 per hour but supports the effort for other workers.

"Even what I'm making right now is not even enough," she says. "How do they really get by? It's hard."

|  |
| --- |
| ***Should the minimum wage be raised?***  **Introduction**  How I will provide background on the issue:  How I will state my main claim:  **Supporting Paragraph #1**  Reason:  Evidence:  **Supporting Paragraph #2**  Reason:  Evidence:  **Conclusion**  How I will restate and reinforce my main claim: |