

LT. GOVERNOR ZUCKERMAN NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 27, 2019

As we start the new biennium, we must focus on the challenges that face Working Vermonters. According to the report "*State of Working Vermont 2018*" (more details on back), many Vermonters are not benefiting from the state's economic growth. Since 1980, while the wealthiest have seen their incomes climb dramatically, working class Vermonters have seen their incomes remain flat. Therefore, **it is prudent that we create and pass legislation that will ease the struggle for many.**

Affordability has two parts; expenses and income. We can and must work on both, simultaneously. There are tangible ways that we can improve affordability for working Vermonters. One is by raising the minimum wage, the other is enacting Universal Healthcare. Wages have been basically stagnant since the 1980s, so we have a lot of catching up to do.

When wages increase by just 50¢ an hour, a full-time worker adds \$1,000 to their pocket each year.

Vermont is also considering raising, or possibly eliminating, the sub-minimum wage, also known as tipped wages. Seven states have done this and another 25 are proposing to do so. This is an economic justice issue, especially for women and people of color. Currently, 79.3% of tipped restaurant workers are women, 48.6% are mothers who are single, 31.5% are workers of color in poverty. Interestingly, only 38% of all tipped workers are under age 24. Accommodation and food services is the single largest source of sexual harassment claims with nearly 90% of tipped restaurant employees experienced unwanted sexual behaviors at work!

Two more ways to have a direct and positive impact on families around our state is to enact paid family leave and invest in more job training opportunities to help Vermonters fill the 10,000 job vacancies we currently have.

A couple of weeks ago, I was pleased to hear Governor Scott say that he is interested in a conversation around integrating human services with education. Some of us have been talking about this type of collaboration for a handful of years because we believe that it will better support families and students plus reduce the cost of education for Vermonters. If you have knowledge or experience in these fields, please contact us to discuss.

Thank you for staying connected



UPCOMING EVENTS

January 27 5:00

Co-hosting '*Dawnland*' movie and discussion. The Schoolhouse, 8 Catkin DR, South Burlington

January 29 1:00

Live on WDEV Radio. 550AM or 96.5FM

January 30

10:00 – Listening to Friends and Family of VT Inmates. Ethan Allen Room, State House, Montpelier

5:00 – Judging Capitol Cook-off at Consumer Night of the Farm Show. Champlain Valley Expo, Essex

February 1, 8, 15 & 22

8:30-10:00 – Weekly '*Coffee with Constituents*' hosted in Lt. Governor's Office. State House, Montpelier

February 1 6:30PM

Attending Waterbury Winterfest. Anderson Skating Rink, Waterbury

February 5 7:30AM

Attending Change the Story & VT Women's Fund Breakfast of Champions, Davis Center, UVM

February 7 7:10AM

Live with Pete & Sarah in the Morning. WVMT 620AM

February 11 6:00PM

Hosting '*The Devil We Know*' movie and panel discussion. Coventry Community Center

For a complete list of events please visit the calendar at:
www.LTGov.vermont.gov

A MILLENNIAL'S THOUGHTS ON HOW TO BUILD A STRONG WORKFORCE

By Zachariah Ralph, Representative WDR-1, Hartland, West Windsor, Windsor

Vermont's workforce is struggling with a lack of younger and qualified workers. To address these challenges, and build a strong Vermont workforce, we will need to bring more young families into the state and train the future generations to not only be able to fill the current job needs but also to fill the jobs of the future.

For me, when considering where to live, much of my decision depended on what type of support networks exist to help lessen the cost of living. My family and my community were enough of an incentive for me to move back to VT despite the affordability challenge. For some, support systems that can reduce the cost of living might be public transportation, childcare, healthcare and energy costs. Raising wages and reducing education costs will also help. I believe that if we can provide more social and public services, we can attract more young families.

Many rural areas across the country are also struggling with an aging demographic and shrinking workforce therefore recruiting workers from other states may not be enough to build our workforce. But VT is not like many other rural areas. We are healthier, safer, and have a good story to tell. We can also quickly build and strengthen our workforce by bringing more foreign immigrants into the state. I believe that our education system should not only prepare children for higher education but also for the jobs that are essential to our communities. Job training programs can do a lot to prepare our youth for good paying jobs that do not require a degree. It is also important to teach our youth critical thinking skills so that they are prepared for the unknowns of the future job market!

DID YOU KNOW THAT VERMONTERS MEDIAN INCOME FELL IN 2017?

By Cindy Weed, Intern for Lieutenant Governor and Small Business Owner

According to The Public Assets report, *State of Working Vermont 2018*, wealthy Vermonters in the top 1% averaged 16 times the income of the rest of us. In fact, median incomes fell in 2017, even below that of 2007. Had income kept pace with the economy, Vermonters median income would have been almost \$6500 higher than it was last year. When budgets are tight, people spend less and that negatively affects our state's economy. For me, a small business owner of over 30 years, when people have less money to spend, this results in less income from sales. I, therefore, also spend less, and the downward cycle continues.

The Public Assets report also notes that, although **Vermonters pay 1.6% more for a basket of goods on average nationally, Vermont's average annual wage is about 82% of the national wage**. This proves that "affordability" is more of an income issue than an expense issue. To remedy this situation, Vermonters need a higher minimum wage immediately to offset these stagnant wages. In 2017, 70,000 people lived in poverty (\$25,094 for family of four), even more than in 2007. Since 1980, Vermont's poverty level has hovered around 10% of the population. **Read the full report at <https://publicassets.org/>.**

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR'S MOVIE SERIES

Lt. Governor Zuckerman has launched his movie series! The February movies is ***The Devil We Know*** and will be showing at the statehouse on February 28th at 6:00PM. He is hosting a special advanced screening on February 11th at 6:00PM at the Coventry Community Center, 168 Main Street in Coventry. For information on all our movies visit www.ltgov.vermont.gov/monthly-movie-series.