

*Dé Máirt, 14 Nollaig, 2010
Tuesday, 14th December, 2010*

2.30 p.m.

**GNÓ COMHALTAÍ PRÍOBHÁIDEACHA
PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

Fógra i dtaobh leasú ar Thairiscint : Notice of Amendment to Motion

104. “That Dáil Éireann:

- recognising that the national minimum wage is low, providing a full-time employee with less than €18,000 annually (with reductions for those under 18 or in their first job), and that amongst EU states it ranks as 12th highest when measured as a percentage of average monthly wages and 9th highest if measured in terms of purchasing power parity;
- accepting that:
 - the current minimum wage has not kept pace with average growth in wages or been increased since July 2007;
 - the 2009 income levy has already reduced the real value of the minimum wage; and
 - the new universal social charge will be payable on wages at this level;
- concerned that 116,000 workers, or 6.6% of the workforce, are living below the poverty line, that the working poor make up 24% of all those in poverty and 40% of all households in poverty, and that the minimum wage is especially relied upon for protection by women, migrants and other vulnerable workers;
- noting that only 4% of workers, and only 1.2% of industrial workers in export sectors, are on the minimum wage, with no major impact on competitiveness;
- acknowledging the role of a statutory minimum wage in protecting against unfair competitive advantage by unscrupulous employers who exploit their workers;
- further acknowledging the opportunity available through the Labour Court, which has yet to be invoked by any employer, to plead inability to pay the national minimum wage;
- reaffirming that a statutory minimum wage is a statement of core values, providing a threshold of decency under which society agrees that workers’ wages should not fall, and that a reduction would signal a race to the bottom in which everyone – low wage workers, public and private sector workers, social welfare claimants and pensioners – will suffer;

- believing that a reduction in the minimum wage will only create a disincentive to work, will have no impact on the public debt or on economic recovery and makes absolutely no sense at any level;
- condemning the Government's logic that poverty wages will create more jobs and that welfare rates must be below even those poverty wages, which logic will in turn require major cuts in welfare payments; and
- appalled that the Government's four year plan has targeted the most vulnerable members of society and convinced that the proposed reduction in the minimum wage of one euro an hour will have the most profound impact on those who are poorest, deepen their poverty and draw more workers into poverty;

condemns the Government's unnecessary, unwise and unfair decision to reduce the national minimum wage and calls for a reversal of this cut." — *Willie Penrose, Eamon Gilmore, Joan Burton, Emmet Stagg, Thomas P. Broughan, Joe Costello, Michael D. Higgins, Brendan Howlin, Ciarán Lynch, Kathleen Lynch, Liz McManus, Brian O'Shea, Jan O'Sullivan, Ruairí Quinn, Pat Rabbitte, Seán Sherlock, Róisín Shortall, Joanna Tuffy, Mary Upton, Jack Wall.*

Leasú:

Amendment:

1. To delete all words after "Dáil Éireann" and substitute the following:

"endorses the National Recovery Plan as a strategy for economic recovery with the aim of restoring stability to the public finances, improving Ireland's cost competitiveness, stimulating enterprise growth and job creation; And in particular recognises that:

- the National Recovery Plan identifies how Ireland's National Minimum Wage (NMW) has increased six times since its introduction and is now 55% higher than its original level. By the end of 2010 the consumer price index is forecast to have increased by approximately 28% since 2001;
- research states clearly that a reduction in the national minimum wage will result in an increase in employment in the medium term;
- the reduction in the minimum wage is one element of the labour market reforms outlined in the National Recovery Plan which also includes the review of sectoral agreements, new labour market activation policies and welfare policy;
- NMW workers are concentrated in sectors badly hit by the downturn including retail, hotels, restaurants and horticulture;
- the State must act to remove any legislative and policy obstacles to job creation;
- even after the reduction to €7.65 per hour, Ireland's NMW remains in the top tier of EU minimum wage rates and the new rate will remain about 12% higher than the UK;
- individual employment rights in Ireland have a sound legislative foundation, active compliance systems and robust institutions for adjudication on rights and resolving disputes together with broad social support; and
- the Government is providing support for lower income families particularly through the Family Income Supplement." — *An tAire Fiontar, Trádála agus Nuálaíochta.*