12th Annual Ethics Forum

Theme: Should California have the Highest Minimum Wage?

Date: Thursday, March 27, 2014
Time: 3:00pm to 5:00pm
Location: University Center, Ballroom

Should California have the highest minimum wage?

Tens of thousands of California's hourly workers will become the best paid in the country when a new minimum wage law goes into effect.

Last September, the state Legislature voted to raise the minimum wage from $8 to $9 on July 1, and to $10 on Jan. 1, 2016. Gov. Jerry Brown and state lawmakers said the increase is needed to keep up with rising costs.

According to a statement issued by Sen. Darrell Steinberg, more than 90 percent of minimum-wage workers in the state are over the age of 20, while nearly 2.4 million children live in a household with a parent who earns the current minimum of $8 per hour. The pay bump will boost a full-time worker's income by about $4,000, to around $20,000 a year.

That's the background for the topic to be discussed at CSU Monterey Bay's 12th annual Ethics Forum – "Should California have the highest minimum wage in the U.S.?"

Jason Scorse, director of the Center for the Blue Economy and a professor at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, will be the keynote speaker. Panelists will include Jody Hansen, president and CEO of the Monterey Peninsula Chamber of Commerce; Cesar Lara, executive director of the Monterey Bay Central Labor Council; and Sam Teel, board chairman of the Monterey County Hospitality Association.

Among the questions they will discuss:

• Will businesses flee California?

• Will low-wage employees flock to the state?

• Will the economy benefit as workers' purchasing power increases?

• How will the increase impact Monterey County's two biggest industries – agriculture and hospitality?

The forum will be held from 3 to 5 p.m., March 27, in the University Center on Sixth Avenue at B Street. The forum is free; attendees will have to purchase a parking permit from a machine on the parking lot.

The College of Business and the School of Information Technology and Communication Design are sponsors of the forum, with support from Associated Students.

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