

The Dallas Morning News

LT. GOV. DAN PATRICK SAYS MINIMUM WAGE HIKE UNLIKELY IN TEXAS

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The Dallas Morning News

February 11, 2021

AUSTIN — While some state Democrats are pushing to raise the minimum wage in Texas above \$7.25 an hour, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick told business leaders any increase is unlikely.

“Raising the minimum wage, in my view, will only take jobs away from people, will only hurt business,” said the Republican, who presides over the state Senate. “So that’s not something I think is going to happen.”

Patrick made his remarks Thursday as keynote speaker for a virtual event hosted by the [Texas Business Leadership Council](#) in response to a question about the issue.

Past efforts to raise the state’s minimum wage above the federal floor have gone nowhere in the GOP-led state Legislature.

At the federal level, President Joe Biden and congressional Democrats are making a push to gradually raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. The increase would lift Americans out of poverty, but add to joblessness, according to projections from the Congressional Budget Office.

“We need entry level jobs for part-time workers, whether they are seniors or kids,” Patrick said. “We need to give business the opportunity to hire the right people and you all know what happens is you raise that wage and say ‘you must pay this,’ you just start cutting jobs.”

Twenty-nine states have hiked their minimum wages above the federal floor, which has been at \$7.25 per hour since 2009.

Rep. Trey Martinez Fischer, D-San Antonio, said Texas should follow suit. He filed a bill to boost the state’s minimum wage to \$15 by 2025 and suggested it would benefit people deemed “essential workers” during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“If you’re working a full time job that pays \$7.25, you live in bone-crushing poverty,” he said.

Patrick, who cast doubt on a push for legalized sports betting earlier in the week, said he plans to release a list of legislative priorities next week. Among the initiatives are proposals to protect businesses from lawsuits related to COVID-19 and to withhold state investments from any Wall Street firm “that says we are turning our back on oil and gas in Texas,” he said.