

## **Chapter 24 Discusses Minimum Wage, Other Legislative Priorities with State Lawmaker**

This year, California voters will be tasked with answering an important question—should California’s minimum wage be increased to \$15 an hour? Debate over increasing the minimum wage has been going on for years, but this will be the first time that voters will be able to weigh in, after a proposed ballot initiative received enough signatures to qualify for the November ballot.

The initiative, sponsored by a union representing health care workers, would increase the state minimum wage by one dollar a year through 2021, and would continue to increase with inflation.

ASCCA has been a consistent, strong voice in opposing increases to the minimum wage, because of the effects it will have on its members, small business owners, and their customers. On March 18, three members of ASCCA’s Chapter 24—Dara Bakhshandeh, Jerry Kubitsky, and James Justus— joined California Small Business Association President Betty Jo Tocelli and a group of small businesses in taking their message directly to California State Assemblymember Shirley Weber (D-San Diego).

Chapter 24’s members explained that many proponents of increasing the minimum wage don’t know, or choose to ignore, the impact it will have on small businesses. A wage hike would only add to the increasing costs of rent, utilities, workers’ compensation, and paid sick leave, all of which will be ultimately passed down to the consumer. Higher wages would also burden state and local governments, leaving taxpayers on the hook.

“I thought it was a very productive meeting,” said James Justus. “The voters really need to understand the costs associated with running a small business.”

ASCCA President Dennis Montalbano expressed his thanks to Chapter 24’s members, saying “The more relationships we build with legislators, the more input we’re able to give. James, Dara, and Jerry really hit a grand slam homerun!”