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ILLINOIS HOTEL & LODGING ASSOCIATION VOICES OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED STATEWIDE MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

CHICAGO, IL (February 2, 2019) — In light of last week’s hearing by the Illinois Senate Labor Committee, which proposed an increase of the Illinois minimum wage from \$8.25 to \$15 per hour, the **Illinois Hotel & Lodging Association (IHLA)** and its members statewide are voicing their opposition to the proposal and warning lawmakers of the damaging economic effects of irresponsibly implemented legislation.

IHLA’s **President and CEO Michael Jacobson** has heard from hoteliers throughout the state expressing their apprehension over the proposal as it stands. “Our partners throughout Illinois are highly concerned by yet another burden on the hotel industry. Between property taxes (with some hotels paying up to \$30,000 per day in Chicago), sales tax, hotel taxes, and now a drastic minimum wage increase? Enough is enough,” he said.

An increase of this magnitude, Jacobson says, will have a severe impact on business and the hotel industry’s ability to provide jobs. He explains that hotels will be unable to raise their room rates quickly enough to cover the costs of increased wages. Furthermore, this legislation will lead to non-hourly employees expecting salary increases, as well, which will cost even the smallest of hotels hundreds of thousands of dollars a year – resulting in job cuts or the closure of properties altogether. “The amount of tax revenue we generate for our communities will take a hit, too,” he noted.

IHLA is also calling for lawmakers to consider both a realistic timetable and geography as they outline plans for a statewide minimum wage increase.

“It is crucial that any increase to the minimum wage is gradually implemented over a course of several years so that businesses can adjust accordingly,” said **Mark Lauer, General Manager of Sheraton Grand Chicago Hotel and Chairman of the Illinois Hotel & Lodging Association.**

Hoteliers throughout the state, particularly those operating businesses outside of Chicago, agree.



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“It is inconceivable to think that our wages in Springfield could soon be the same as our colleagues in Chicago,” said **Darin Dame, General Manager of Marriott Residence Inn in Springfield, IL.** “The cost of living here is considerably lower than it is to our north. Taking a one-size-fits-all approach to minimum wage throughout the state is a grave mistake that will have unintended consequences when it comes to employment in the hospitality industry.”

Raymond Ceresa, the General Manager of The DoubleTree by Hilton in Bloomington, IL adds, “Hotels in the Bloomington market have experienced a tough couple of years with State Farm’s relocation and other challenges. Occupancy and room rates are at their lowest points in recent memory. Nearly doubling our minimum wage would prove to be devastating to our hotels, forcing many of us to consider shutting our doors and laying off our employees.”

Jacobson concurs, stating that technology also has the potential to disrupt the industry and its employees, citing the availability of apps to check in to a hotel or a robot that can deliver toiletries to a guestroom. “With this proposal, Illinois lawmakers are giving hotels more reason to transition jobs away from hard-working Illinoisans and replace them with technology. It’s a shame, because in hospitality, it’s the people who make Illinois unique and memorable.

“Furthermore, there are few industries that foster growth from within like ours,” he continued. “Most of our general managers started off working in the front office, as bellmen or in housekeeping. We embody the American dream, and this proposal puts that dream at risk.”

To schedule an interview, contact Janet Isabelli, janet@imrchicago.com.

About Illinois Hotel & Lodging Association

The Illinois Hotel & Lodging Association (IHLA) is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(6) trade association that represents the lodging industry in Illinois. IHLA members consist of over 400 hotels and their employees throughout the state as well as related industry partners and suppliers. IHLA provides significant benefits to its members by advocating the industry’s position on political issues, educating through quality, relevant seminars and webinars, providing promotional exposure and access to current industry news, resources, and contacts through IHLA’s website, marketing initiatives, member programs, and networking events, and recognizing hotel employees for their outstanding accomplishments, service, and leadership in the Illinois hospitality and





lodging industry. For more information, visit www.illinoishotels.org and follow the latest news on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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