Good afternoon chair and members of the committee. For the record, my name is Annette Magnus and I am the Executive Director of Battle Born Progress. We rise in strong support of AJR10 from 2019.

Nevadans are depending on you, their legislators to start somewhere in bringing them some economic relief especially at a time like this. When we started work on this bill in 2019 we had no idea how important it would become. AJR10 is critical because businesses have been abusing the provision of connecting healthcare with the minimum wage. We have heard story after story where businesses are able to pay $1.00 less than the current minimum wage in the state simply because they offer unaffordable garbage healthcare plans that employees rarely opt into because of cost. No one should be paid a dollar less because their employer is taking advantage of a loophole to save a dollar an hour especially when people are struggling. We MUST give voters the ability to remove this provision that has been taken advantage of and this is our chance to do so. Nevadans should have access to good affordable health care AND get a living wage - this should never be an either/or.

Another critical part of this bill is tying the state minimum wage to the federal minimum wage so if wages go up faster than what we approved in 2019, Nevadans can benefit.

AJR10 also puts the legislature in a position so that you, as our elected officials, can continue to improve people’s lives by ensuring that the minimum wage is raised to continue meeting increased costs of living instead of going through an intense process to make modifications. This measure will bring this issue before the voters and let them decide on this issue.

The business community continues to resist any attempts to enact a raise to the minimum wage, claiming that it will lead to mass layoffs and crush small businesses. As someone who runs a small business I can attest that I’m able to manage my small nonprofit and ensure my staff is compensated properly and I pay 100% of their health insurance. Other businesses can do it too. If you prioritize the life and health of your employees, then you find a way to pay them enough to afford food, housing, transportation, and medical care - especially during a global pandemic.

Many of us have been fighting to raise the wage for years, and now is our chance to finally do something about it. Nevada is a place of second chances for many workers, a land of opportunity where hard work pays off for many, but not for our minimum wage workers, and we need to do right by them by passing AJR10. We want to thank the Speaker again for working with us on this critical issue.