

ACORN bolsters the case

by By the Omaha World-Herald

Employers sometimes argue that government destroys jobs when it raises the minimum wage. They might take a measure of agreement from a highly unexpected source.

A Wall Street Journal column, written by John Fund, took a look at the inner workings of ACORN, a union-financed activist group that campaigns for higher minimum wages and other liberal causes. (ACORN is part of the political coalition that tries to draw moral sustenance from vilifying Wal-Mart.)

Fund portrays an organization that says one thing and does another. ACORN pressured the city of Santa Fe, N.M., into establishing a \$9.50 an hour minimum wage, he wrote, "but pays its organizers \$25,000 a year for a required 54-hour week - \$8.90 an hour." Some ACORN workers in Missouri were asked to sign a contract calling for 80 hours of work in a seven-day week.

How does ACORN explain itself? In 1995, Fund wrote, the group went to court in an unsuccessful attempt to win an exemption from the California minimum-wage law. Its lawyers said that "the more ACORN must pay each individual outreach worker ... the fewer outreach workers it will be able to hire."

Bingo. The next time the restaurant industry, or the lawn-care industry, makes a similar argument, it would be entitled to quote ACORN as its authority.

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