

February 22, 2021

Dear Members of Congress:

The undersigned organizations enthusiastically support the Raise the Wage Act of 2021, as introduced in the Senate by Senators Bernie Sanders (VT) and Patty Murray (WA), and in the House by Representative Robert C. “Bobby” Scott (VA).

If enacted, the Raise the Wage Act of 2021 would:

- Gradually raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2025;
- After 2025, adjust the minimum wage each year to keep pace with growth in the median wage—a measure of wages for typical workers;
- Phase out the egregious subminimum wage for tipped workers, which has been frozen at a meager \$2.13 since 1991; and
- Sunset unacceptable subminimum wages for workers with disabilities employed in sheltered workshops and for workers under age 20.

Since fast-food workers in New York City first walked off the job in 2012, demanding a \$15 minimum wage and the right to form a union, workers across the country have completely changed the conversation and politics surrounding the minimum wage. Yet, 20 states still have not raised their minimum wages beyond the paltry \$7.25 federal minimum wage, and many more have only marginally higher minimum wages than the federal floor—despite clearly negative impacts on workers across the country. Those negative impacts also disproportionately affect Black and brown workers, who have historically been segregated into the lowest paying occupations in the U.S., and who are leading the fight for \$15 and a union.

Congress should heed the demands of workers of color, communities, and their constituents and waste no more time in passing the Raise the Wage Act. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour and eliminating subminimum wages for tipped workers, youth workers, and workers with disabilities is a long overdue, human rights imperative and a critical racial and gender justice issue—one that will make a crucial difference in the lives of millions of workers and in communities across the country.

Gradually raising the federal minimum wage to \$15 by 2025 would lift pay for nearly 32 million workers—21% of the U.S. workforce. Affected workers who work year-round would earn an extra \$3,300 a year—enough to make a tremendous difference in the life of a cashier, home health aide, or fast-food worker who today struggles to get by on less than \$25,000 a year. A majority (59%) of workers whose total family income is below the poverty line would receive a pay increase if the minimum wage were raised to \$15 by 2025.

Raising the minimum wage to \$15 and eliminating subminimum wages will be particularly significant for workers of color and women workers, who have historically been pushed into the most underpaid paid jobs through occupational segregation. Passing the Raise the Wage Act would help narrow both the racial pay gap and the gender pay gap. Of those whose pay would increase, nearly 6 in 10 (59%) are women and more than a quarter (28%) have children. One-third (31%) of African-American workers and one-quarter (26%) of Latinx workers would get a raise if the federal minimum wage were increased to \$15. Almost one in four (23%) of those people who would benefit is a Black or Latina woman. African-American workers and Latinx workers are paid 10–15% less than white workers with the same characteristics, so the Raise the Wage Act would deliver the largest benefits to Black and Latinx workers -- about \$3,500 annually for a year-round worker. The Raise the Wage Act will also deliver increased wages to an estimated 1.45 million LGBTQ workers and would reduce the proportion of male same-sex couples living in poverty by one-third and female same-sex couples by almost one-half. There would be similar reductions in poverty among LGBTQ people who are not in same-sex couple households, with the largest gains for those with the highest rates of poverty—Black, Latinx, bisexual, and transgender adults.

Raising wages has never been more urgent than during this pandemic. Essential and frontline workers make up a majority of those who would benefit from a \$15 minimum wage. Members of Congress should do more than pay lip service to frontline workers; they should make sure they get higher wages. The median pay is well under \$15 an hour for many essential and frontline jobs; examples include substitute teachers, nursing assistants, and home health aides. More than one-third (35%) of those working in residential or nursing care facilities would see their pay increase, in addition to home health aides and other health care support workers. One in three retail sector workers (36%) would get a raise, including 42% of workers in grocery stores. More than four-in-ten (43%) of janitors, housekeepers, and other cleaning workers would benefit. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of servers, cooks, and other food preparation workers would see their earnings rise by \$5,800 on a year-round basis. For 6 million tipped food service workers, a majority female workforce, the subminimum wage for tipped workers is a legacy of slavery that has been a source of poverty, sexual harassment, and exposure to health risks and hostile customers during the pandemic. Ten million workers in health care, education, construction, and manufacturing would see a raise—representing nearly one-third (31%) of the workers who would see a raise.

Contrary to what opponents of a living wage would argue, our economy can more than afford a \$15 minimum wage. Workers earning the current federal minimum wage are paid less per hour in real dollars than their counterparts were paid 50 years ago. Businesses can afford to pay the most underpaid worker in the U.S. today substantially more than what her counterpart was paid half a century ago. The economy has grown dramatically over the past 50 years, and workers are producing more from each hour of work, with productivity nearly doubling since the late 1960s. If the minimum wage had been raised at the same pace as productivity growth since the late 1960s, it would be over \$20 an hour today.

In fact, an immediate increase in the minimum wage is necessary for the health of our economy. A \$15 minimum wage by 2025 would generate \$107 billion in higher wages for workers and would also benefit communities across the country. Because underpaid workers spend much of their extra earnings, this injection of wages will help stimulate the economy and spur greater business activity and job growth.

It is long past time to pass the Raise the Wage Act of 2021—and we call on all Members of Congress to finally give nearly 32 million workers the raise they have fought so hard to secure.

A Better Balance
Action Center on Race & the Economy
Adelante Alabama Worker Center
Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc. (ABLE)
Advocates for Better Children's Diets
Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc
AFL-CIO
AIDS Alabama
Alabama Arise
Alameda County Community Food Bank
Alianza Nacional de Campesinas
Amara Legal Center
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
American Public Health Association
Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)
Americans for Tax Fairness
AnitaB.org
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO
Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence
Asset Funders Network
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Be A Hero
Bend the Arc Jewish Action
Bet Tzedek Legal Services
Black Visions
Block Builderz
Border Workers United
Bridgeways
Business for a Fair Minimum Wage
Business For Good San Diego
CAAP
California Association of Food Banks
Campaign for America's Future
Caring Across Generations
CASA
Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities
Center for American Progress
Center for Disability Rights
Center for Economic and Policy Research
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Center for LGBTQ Economic Advancement & Research
Center for Popular Democracy
Center for Public Representation

Center for Workers' Rights
Center on Policy Initiatives
Centro de los Derechos del Migrante
Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en Lucha (CTUL)
Centro Legal de la Raza
Change Machine
Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy
Chicago Foundation for Women
Child Care Aware® of America
Children's Defense Fund
Civic Ventures
Clean Up the River Environment (CURE)
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Coalition for Labor Union Women, San Francisco
Coalition of Labor Union Women
Coalition on Human Needs
Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking
Communications Workers of America (CWA)
Community Enabler Developer, Inc.
Community Legal Services, Philadelphia
Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI) / POWER-PAC IL
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF)
CRLA Foundation
DC Dorothy Day Catholic Worker
Demos
Disability Rights DC at University Legal Services
Domestic Violence Legal Empowerment and Appeals Project
Economic Opportunity Institute
Economic Policy Institute
Encuentro
Endangered Species Coalition
Equal Justice Center
Equal Pay Today
Equal Rights Advocates
Equality Labs
Equity Advocates
Etowah County Women's Democratic Club
Etowah Democrats Club
Every Texan
Fair Work Center
Family Equality
Farmworker Association of Florida
Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin
Feeding Texas

Fight for \$15 and a Union
First Focus Campaign for Children
Florida Policy Institute
Food Bank of Northern Nevada
Food Chain Workers Alliance
Food for People
Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)
For Our Future Action Fund
Freedom Network USA
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Fund for Community Reparations for Autistic People of Color's Interdependence, Survival, & Empowerment
Futures Without Violence
Gender Justice
Georgetown Law Center
Granite State Interfaith Action Fund
Granite State Organizing Project
Groundwork Action
Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law & Economic Justice
Hawaii Children's Action Network Speaks!
HBCU Collective
Hispanic Federation
Hometown Action
Hunger Solutions Minnesota
Hunger Task Force
ICNA Council for Social Justice
Illinois Hunger Coalition
In The Public Interest
Indiana Institute for Working Families
Indivisible
Inland Empire Labor Council AFL-CIO
institute for Women's Policy research
International Brotherhood of Teamsters
Islamic Relief USA
Islamophobia Studies Center
Jobs with Justice of East Tennessee
Just Economics of Western North Carolina
Justice at Work
Justice at Work (PA)
Justice for Migrant Women
Juvenile Law Center
Kentucky Center for Economic Policy
Kentucky Equal Justice Center
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
Lambda Legal

Land Stewardship Project
LatinoLEAD
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
Legal Aid at Work
Legal Aid Justice Center
Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia
Legal Momentum, the Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund
Living United for Change in Arizona (LUCHA)
Long Beach Alliance for Clean Energy
Louisiana Budget Project
Macomb Immigrant Service Center
Maine People's Alliance
MANA, A National Latina Organization
Maryland Hunger Solutions
Massachusetts Employment Lawyers Association
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
Meriden Congregational Church, UCC
Michigan Immigrant Rights Center
Michigan League for Public Policy
Michigan United
Milwaukee Area Service & Hospitality Workers Organization
Minnesota Voice
Mississippi National Organization for Women
Missouri Faith Voices
Missouri Jobs with Justice
MomsRising
Mothers Outreach Network
Muslim Advocates
NALC
National Action Network
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of Social Workers
National Black Justice Coalition
National CAPACD- National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development
National Center for Law and Economic Justice
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Coalition for the Homeless
National Council for Occupational Safety and Health
National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA (NCC)
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council on Aging
National Disabled Law Students Association
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)

National Domestic Violence Resource Center
National Domestic Workers Alliance
National Employment Law Project
National Employment Lawyers Association
National Employment Lawyers Association - Eastern Pennsylvania
National Equality Action Team (NEAT)
National Farm to School Network
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Network to End Domestic Violence
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National WIC Association
National Women's Health Network
National Women's Law Center
Native Women Lead
NC-NELA (North Carolina National Employment Law Project)
Network for Victim Recovery DC
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
New Earth
New Georgia Project
New Hampshire Youth Movement
New Haven Legal Assistance Association
New Mexico Center on Law and Policy
New Orleans Workers'™ Center for Racial Justice
North Carolina Justice Center
Northwest Harvest
Northwest Workers' Justice Project
Oasis Legal Services
Ohio Organizing Collaborative
Oklahoma Policy Institute
One Fair Wage
One Fair Wage Action
One Pennsylvania
Operation Food Search
Our Revolution
Oxfam America
Parent Voices CA
Partnership for America's Children
Pathways for Prosperity Coalition, Fayetteville, NC
Patriotic Millionaires
Pennsylvania AFL-CIO
People For the American Way
People's Action
People's Parity Project
Philadelphia Drivers' Union

Physicians for Reproductive Health
Policy Matters Ohio
Poligon Education Fund
Power Coalition for Equity and Justice
Preble Street Maine Hunger Initiative
Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada
Prosperity Now
Public Citizen
Public Justice Center
RAISE High Road Restaurants
Raise the Wage PA
Reframe Health and Justice
Restaurant Opportunities Center of DC
Restaurant Opportunities Centers United
RESULTS DC/MD
Results for America
Reviving the Islamic Sisterhood for Empowerment (RISE)
Rights & Democracy NH
Rights & Democracy VT
River VALley Organizing
ROC-Chicago
ROC-Minnesota
ROC-New York
ROC-Pennsylvania
San Francisco-Marin Food Bank
SaverLife
Sciencecorps
SEIU Wisconsin State Council
Service Employees International Union
Shriver Center on Poverty Law
Sierra Club
Social Justice Associates of South Church, Portsmouth NH
Southwest Detroit Immigrant and Refugee Center
Southwest Women's Law Center
Step Up Louisiana
TakeAction Minnesota
Tax March
Temp Worker Justice
Terence Crutcher Foundation
The 99% Pennsylvania campaign
The AIDS Institute
The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis
The Employee Rights Advocacy Institute For Law & Policy (The Institute)
The International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)

The Legal Aid Society
The National Domestic Violence Hotline
The New York Womens Foundation
The Partnership for Working Families
The Rebuild, Overcome, and Rise (ROAR) Center of UMB
The West Side Commons
The Women and Girls Foundation of Southwest Pennsylvania
The Women's Building
TIME'S UP Now
Ujima Inc.: The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community
UnidosUS
Unitarian Universalist Action New Hampshire
Unitarian Universalist Justice PA
United Food and Commercial Workers International Union
United State of Women
United Steelworkers
United Valley Interfaith (UVIP)
United Vision for Idaho
Unity Fellowship of Christ Church NYC
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity
Virginia Poverty Law Center
Voices for Progress
Washington Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs
Washington Wage Claim Project
Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights
West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy
Western Center on Law and Poverty
Western Pennsylvania Employment Lawyers Association
Wildfire: Igniting Community Action to End Poverty in Arizona
Women Employed
Womenpreneurs
Women's Fund of Rhode Island
Women's Institute for Secure Retirement
Women's Law Project
WOMEN'S WAY
Worker Justice Center of New York
Workers Defense Action Fund
Working Families Party
Working Washington
Workplace Fairness
Workplace Justice Project at Loyola Law Clinic
Worksafe
Young Invincibles
YWCA USA
ZERO TO THREE

