



Faith-based Organizations Support *The Raise the Wage Act of 2019*

The undersigned faith-based advocacy and religious organizations enthusiastically support the Raise the Wage Act of 2019, as introduced by Senators Bernie Sanders (VT) and Patty Murray (WA), and Representatives Robert C. “Bobby” Scott (VA), Mark Pocan (WI) and Stephanie Murphy (FL). We are increasingly concerned about the plight of our sisters and brothers who work hard but still struggle making ends meet. As a remedy to that plight the Raise the Wage Act is legislation that not only provides for workers’ financial well-being, but fosters their sense of self-worth as individuals and members of society.

According to our faith traditions, justice requires that every worker receive a just wage that provides a standard of living in accordance with their God-given dignity. The current federal minimum wage of \$7.25/hour and \$2.10/hour for tipped workers is woefully insufficient and has remained stagnant for a decade. This disregard is a shameful statement of neglect for the lowest paid people in our society.

The provisions of the Raise the Wage Act take substantive steps to ensure that the wages people earn are enough to provide for their livelihoods. If enacted, this legislation would:

- Raise the federal minimum wage to \$8.55 this year and increase it over the next five years until it reaches \$15 an hour in 2024;
- After 2024, adjust the minimum wage each year to keep pace with growth in the typical worker’s wages;
- Phase out the outdated subminimum wage for tipped workers, which has been frozen at a meager \$2.13 since 1991;
- Sunset the much-criticized ability of employers to pay workers with disabilities a subminimum wage through certificates issued by DOL; and,
- Phase out the subminimum wage for workers under the age of 20.

Our families and our economy have been increasingly burdened by wage stagnation and income inequality. The Raise the Wage Act of 2019 will begin to lighten this burden by raising the wage floor to broadly impact those at the bottom of the workforce. According to policy experts more than 1 in 4 workers would be impacted by this legislation, 90 percent of whom are over the age of 20. Some estimates project that those working year-round would see a raise on the order of \$3,500 a year. The difference that makes for a preschool teacher, bank teller, or fast-food worker who today struggles to get by on around \$20,000 per year would be remarkable. The *Raise the Wage Act* will especially, positively benefit women and minority workers, who are

disproportionately represented among low wage workers. Additionally, the provisions that protect workers with disabilities recognize the value of the work done by those individuals and corrects the harmful and exploitive practice of significantly under-paying individuals with disabilities.

The time for the *Raise the Wage Act* is long overdue. Justice cannot wait; and neither can Americans who labor every day with insufficient pay. We call on Congress to enact this important piece of legislation as quickly as possible, and for President Trump to sign it when it comes to his desk.

Bread for the World

Church World Service

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

National Council of Jewish Women

United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries

The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Franciscan Action Network

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Interfaith Worker Justice

Union for Reform Judaism

Faith in Public Life

Ecumenical Poverty Initiative

Conference of Superiors of Men (Catholic)

Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries

Unitarian Universalist Association

Poligon Education Fund

Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, St. Louise Province

National Council of Churches