

Pass the Raise the Wage Act

July 15, 2019

Dear Members of Congress:

As members of a broad coalition of organizations that promote economic security and equity for women, we strongly urge you to pass the Raise the Wage Act as a top priority of the 116th Congress.

The Raise the Wage Act will raise the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$15 an hour by 2024, then index the minimum wage so that it continues to rise along with wages overall. It will also end unfair exclusions for tipped workers, people with disabilities, and youth so that they, too, can benefit from a decent minimum wage.

Women across the country—especially women of color—continue to experience a pay gap and a higher risk of poverty than men. Women working full time, year round typically make only 80 percent of what their male counterparts make, leaving a wage gap of 20 cents on the dollar. This wage gap varies by race and is larger for women of color: Black women working full time, year round typically make only 61 cents, Native women only 58 cents, and Latinas only 53 cents, for every dollar paid to their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts. While Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) women make 85 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men, many AAPI communities experience drastically wider pay gaps.

Women's overrepresentation in low-wage jobs is a driving force behind the gender pay gap. Women are close to two-thirds of the workforce in jobs that pay the minimum wage or just a few dollars above it, as well as two-thirds of workers in tipped jobs. Women of color are particularly overrepresented among tipped workers and other low-wage workers. They are particularly harmed by the \$7.25 federal minimum wage that has not gone up in a decade and by the \$2.13 tipped minimum cash wage that has been frozen for an astonishing 28 years.

Poverty-level wages heighten women's economic vulnerability, which in turn heightens their vulnerability to sexual harassment on the job. Women who rely on tips to survive often feel compelled to tolerate inappropriate behavior from customers so as not to jeopardize their income and employers are often unwilling to protect their employees for fear of upsetting a paying customer. Women's lack of economic power in these workplaces perpetuates the already pervasive culture of sexual harassment in industries that employ large numbers of tipped workers.

The Raise the Wage Act is critically needed to advance women's economic security and dignity in the workplace. The Economic Policy Institute estimates that increasing the federal minimum wage to \$15 by 2024 would give nearly one in three working women a raise, including 41 percent of Black working women, 38 percent of working Latinas, 29 percent of white working women, and 18 percent of Asian working women.

Women and people of color have been left behind by our economy and our policies far too often, for far too long. Adopting the Raise the Wage Act would mark a crucial step toward ensuring they can work with equity, dignity, and safety. There is no more fitting way to begin this historic Congress than by making real, concrete progress in ensuring all women receive adequate pay.

We urge you to prioritize the Raise the Wage Act in the 116th Congress by swiftly passing this legislation. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Emily Martin, Vice President for Education & Workplace Justice at the National Women's Law Center, at (202) 588-5180.

Sincerely,

9to5, National Association of Working Women

9to5 Georgia

A Better Balance

Abortion Access Front

ACCESS

African American Health Alliance

All-Options

Amara Legal Center

American Association of University Women (AAUW)

American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

AFT Local 1766 (Union of Rutgers Administrators)

American Medical Student Association

American Psychological Association

Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)

Arizona Coalition to End Sexual & Domestic Violence

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO

Black Women's Roundtable

MS Black Women's Roundtable

Bucks County Women's Advocacy Coalition

California Child Care Resource & Referral Network
Cambridge Committee to Raise the Minimum Wage
Caring Across Generations
Center for American Progress
Center for Frontline Retail
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Center for Popular Democracy
Chelsea Collaborative
Citizen Action of New York
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW)
 California Capital Chapter, CLUW
 Capital Area Chapter, CLUW
 Chesapeake Bay Chapter, CLUW
 Chicago Chapter, CLUW
 Cleveland Chapter, CLUW
 Florida Chapter, CLUW
 Genesee County Chapter, CLUW
 Grand Prairie Arlington Chapter, CLUW
 Greater Kansas City Chapter, CLUW
 Greater New Jersey Chapter, CLUW
 Greater Oklahoma City Chapter, CLUW
 Houston Chapter, CLUW
 Kate Mullany Chapter, CLUW
 King County Chapter, CLUW
 Lorain County Chapter, CLUW
 Los Angeles Chapter, CLUW

Metro-Detroit Chapter, CLUW
Metropolitan District of Columbia Chapter, CLUW
Missouri Chapter, CLUW
Northeast Cleveland Chapter, CLUW
Pennsylvania State Chapter, CLUW
Philadelphia Chapter, CLUW
Rhode Island Chapter, CLUW
San Diego Chapter, CLUW
San Francisco Chapter, CLUW
Southwestern Pennsylvania Chapter, CLUW
St. Louis Chapter, CLUW
Western New York Chapter, CLUW
Western Virginia Chapter, CLUW

Coalition on Human Needs

Color of Change

Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF)

Criminalization of Poverty Project at the Institute for Policy Studies

Day One

Domestic Violence Legal Empowerment & Appeals Project

Economic Opportunity Institute

Empire Justice Center

Equal Rights Advocates

Equality North Carolina

Equality Ohio

Fair World Project

Federally Employed Women

Feminist Majority Foundation

Food Chain Workers Alliance
Forward Together
Found Objects Transformed
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Futures Without Violence
Gender Justice
Health Care for America Now
If/When/How: Lawyering for Reproductive Justice
Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault
In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda
Innovation Ohio Education Fund
Institute for Women's Policy Research
Interfaith Worker Justice
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action
Jewish Women International
Jobs With Justice
 Jobs With Justice, Cleveland
 Jobs With Justice, St Joseph Valley Project
Justice for Migrant Women
Kentucky Equal Justice Center
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA)
Las Hermanas USA
Laundry Workers Center
Legal Momentum, The Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund
Maine Women's Lobby
Massachusetts Voter Table
Milwaukee Area Service & Hospitality Workers Organization (MASH)

Mississippi Coalition Against Domestic Violence
MNCASA
Moms Demand Action, Triad North Carolina
MomsRising
NAACP
NARAL Pro-Choice, North Carolina
National Alliance to End Sexual Violence
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)
National Association of Social Workers, Massachusetts Chapter
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Coalition for the Homeless
National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Central Ohio Chapter
National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Queen City Metropolitan Chapter
National Committee on Pay Equity
National Council of Jewish Women
 National Council of Jewish Women, Arizona
 National Council of Jewish Women, Greater New Orleans
 National Council of Jewish Women, Pennsylvania
National Domestic Workers Alliance
National Employment Law Project
National Employment Lawyers Association
National Immigration Law Center
National Institute for Reproductive Health (NIRH)
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
National Network of Abortion Funds
National Organization for Women (NOW)
 NOW, Louisiana

NOW, North Carolina
NOW, Raleigh
NOW, Southwest Pennsylvania
NOW, Triad North Carolina
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Law Center
National Women's Health Network
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence
New Mexico Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs
New Voices for Reproductive Justice
New York Union Child Care Coalition
North Carolina State AFL-CIO
North Carolina Women United
Nurses for Sexual and Reproductive Health
Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence
Ohio Domestic Violence Network
Ohio Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Oklahoma Women's Coalition
Organization United for Respect
Oxfam America
PathWays PA
Pennsylvania NOW
People For the American Way
PHENOM (Public Higher Education Network of Massachusetts)
Physicians for Reproductive Health
PL+US: Paid Leave for the United States

PowHer New York
Project IRENE
Public Justice Center
PWN-USA
Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition
Restaurant Opportunities Centers United
 Restaurant Opportunities Center, Pennsylvania
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)
Shriver Center on Poverty Law
Solace Crisis Treatment Center
Tennessee Valley Coalition to End Homelessness
Tewa Women United
The Women's Law Center of Maryland
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Mass Action Network
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
United for A Fair Economy
United Democratic Women of MD, Inc.
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity
V.I. Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Council
Valencia Shelter Services
Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Voices for Progress
Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs
Washington State Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs
West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy
Western Center on Law and Poverty

Women & Girls Foundation of Southwest Pennsylvania

Women Employed

Women Lawyers of Sacramento

Women of Reform Judaism

Women's Law Project

Women's Rights and Empowerment Network

Women's Medical Fund, Pennsylvania

WomenRising, Inc.

Working Washington/Fair Work Center

Workplace Fairness

WV FREE

Yellowhammer Fund

YWCA USA

YWCA, Dayton

ZERO TO THREE