

Co-Sponsor and Support Swift Passage of the Raise the Wage Act

February 5, 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 co-sponsor and push for swift passage of 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 cosponsoring and urging swift passage of 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

ACCESS

African American Health Alliance

American Association of University Women (AAUW)

AAUW Texas

American Federation of Teachers (AFT), AFL-CIO

AFT Local 1766 (Union of Rutgers Administrators)

American Psychological Association

Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)

Arizona Coalition to End Sexual & Domestic Violence

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance

Cambridge Committee to Raise the Minimum Wage

Caring Across Generations

Center for American Progress

Center for Frontline Retail

Center for Popular Democracy

Chelsea Collaborative

Coalition of Labor Union Women

California Capital Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women

Capital Area Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women

Chesapeake Bay Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women

Chicago Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women

Cleveland Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women

Florida Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women

Genesee County Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women

Grand Prairie Arlington Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women

Greater Kansas City Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women
Greater New Jersey Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women
Greater Oklahoma City Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women
Houston Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women
Kate Mullany Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women
King County Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women
Lorain County Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women
Los Angeles Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women
Metropolitan District of Columbia Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women
Missouri Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women
Northeast Cleveland Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women
Pennsylvania Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women
Philadelphia Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women
Rhode Island Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women
San Diego Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women
San Francisco Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women
Southwestern Pennsylvania Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women
St. Louis Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women
Western New York Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women
Western Virginia Chapter, Coalition of Labor Union Women

Color Of Change

Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF)

Day One

Equal Rights Advocates

Equality North Carolina

Equality Ohio

Family Values @ Work

Federally Employed Women

Found Objects Transformed

Futures Without Violence

Gender Justice

Health Care for America Now

Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault

In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda

Innovation Ohio Education Fund

Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action

Jobs With Justice

Cleveland Jobs with Justice

Justice for Migrant Women

Kentucky Equal Justice Center
Labor Project for Working Families
Legal Momentum, The Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund
Maine Women's Lobby
Massachusetts Voter Table
MNCASA
Moms Demand Action - Triad NC
MS Black Women's Roundtable
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 Committee on Pay Equity
National Council of Jewish Women
National Domestic Workers Alliance
National Organization for Women
 North Carolina NOW
 Raleigh NOW
 Southwest Pennsylvania NOW
 Triad NOW
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Law Center
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
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
People For the American Way
PHENOM (Public Higher Education Network of Massachusetts)
PowHer New York
Project IRENE
PWN-USA

Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition
Restaurant Opportunities Centers United
 Restaurant Opportunities Center of Pennsylvania
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
Sexual Assault Services of Northwest New Mexico
Solace Crisis Treatment Center
Tewa Women United
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Mass Action Network
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
United Democratic Women of MD, Inc.
V.I. Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Council
Valencia Shelter Services
Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Voices for Progress
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 of Reform Judaism
Women's Law Project
Women's Rights and Empowerment Network
Working Washington/Fair Work Center
YWCA USA
 YWCA Dayton