



Unitarian Universalists
for Social Justice
In the National Capital Region

Minimum Wage Talking Points

How many would be affected by a minimum wage raise?

- Nearly six million working people earn just the minimum wage or slightly above it, most all of them live below the poverty level.....nearly 28 million people live in poverty.
- In Virginia, 530,000 people would be directly affected by increasing the federal minimum wage to \$10.10 (55.7% are women)

Who are minimum wage workers?

- The average age of minimum wage workers is 35. This is not a first-time job for a teenager still living at home.
- Minimum wage workers are fast food workers, home care workers who care for our elderly and disabled, people who clean our offices and homes.
- There are millions more who earn a dollar or two above minimum wage who ring us up every day at the grocery store, the department store. Anywhere there is a cash register, there is a low-wage, 'little to no' benefits worker.
- Restaurant workers earn even less than minimum wage - just \$2.13 an hour, and though they do receive tips, their hourly wage should be adjusted to be at least 70% of minimum wage (especially at the lower cost restaurants).

How much would it cost to raise the minimum wage?

- A \$10.10 minimum wage would cost business less than one cent (one-third of a penny) of every dollar spent on wages.
- Sixty-seven percent of small businesses support raising the minimum wage and indexing it to inflation according to the Small Business Majority.

I care about this issue because...

- As a Unitarian Universalist, my faith calls me to address the gross inadequacy of the current federal minimum wage which forces millions of hard working Americans to live in poverty, denying them their basic human dignity.

Why is indexing to inflation important?

- Over the last 35 years, CEO pay increased 875%, accounting for inflation. During that same time, average worker pay only increased 5%.
- In real terms, the minimum wage has actually declined over the past 45 years. People earning the minimum wage in 1968 would be earning \$10.77 in today's dollars.
- If the minimum wage had been raised to keep up with productivity, it would be \$22 an hour, according to a study by the Center for Economic and Policy Research mentioned in the Huffington Post. (Fun math fact: \$22 is just 22 hundreds of one percent of the actual median CEO wage of \$10,000 an hour.)

How does the U.S. stack up with other countries in minimum wage comparison?

- The U.S. is near the bottom of developed countries' minimum wage
- Even the IMF counsels the U.S. to raise its minimum wage, both to stimulate the economy and to reduce the U.S. 15% poverty rate. Raising the wage is a shot in the arm for our economy, giving working families more money to spend, which in turn gives our community businesses more customers.

For Economic Justice and Income Inequality resources, visit the UUSJ website issues pages at www.uusj.net/wp/economic-justice/

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