



# AMERICA'S JOURNEY FOR JUSTICE

*Legislative Advocacy Day*

*September 16, 2015*

ALABAMA  
GEORGIA  
SOUTH CAROLINA  
NORTH CAROLINA  
VIRGINIA  
WASHINGTON, DC

## **Support the *Raise the Wage Act* (S. 1150 / H.R. 2150)**

- The current minimum wage today pays only \$15,000 per year, which is \$3,000 below the poverty level for a family of 3.
- The *Raise the Wage Act* will deliver long-overdue raises to a large segment of the workforce: more than 1 in 4 workers. That workforce is composed not of teens, but almost entirely adults—nearly 90 percent. The average age of workers who would get a raise is 36, nearly half have some years of college education, and 20 percent hold associate's degrees or higher. More than 27 percent are working parents with children, and half currently have family incomes of less than \$40,000 per year.
- The *Raise the Wage Act* will increase the federal minimum wage to \$12.00 by 2020; will gradually eliminate the sub-minimum wage for tipped workers; and will index the minimum wage to median wages, so as wages grow for the workforce overall, they will also grow for the lowest-wage workers in this county.

We strongly urge you to co-sponsor and do all you can to support H.R. 2150 / S. 1150, the *Raise the Wage Act*. This vital legislation will increase the federal minimum wage to \$12.00 by 2020; will gradually eliminate the sub-minimum wage for tipped workers; and will index the minimum wage to median wages, so as wages grow for the workforce overall, they will also grow for the lowest-wage workers in this county.

At a time when wage stagnation and income inequality pose serious threats to our families and our economy, the *Raise the Wage Act* would begin to reverse that cycle and raise pay broadly across the bottom of the workforce. By raising the minimum wage to \$12 by 2020, it will restore the minimum wage to roughly half of the average wage—which is where the federal minimum wage stood 40-50 years ago when the nation enjoyed strong growth and low unemployment.

The *Raise the Wage Act* will deliver long-overdue raises to a large segment of the workforce: more than 1 in 4 workers. That workforce is composed not of teens, but almost entirely adults—nearly 90 percent. The average age of workers who would get a raise is 36, nearly half have some years of college education, and 20 percent hold associate’s degrees or higher. More than 27 percent are working parents with children, and half currently have family incomes of less than \$40,000 per year.

These are the frontline workers who make America run. Yet they are struggling as our economy enjoys strong growth but remains tilted towards low-paying jobs. The time for the *Raise the Wage Act* is long overdue, and we cannot delay in working toward its passage. We look forward to hearing your position on this issue and what other steps you may be taking to support low-end workers. Finally, we would appreciate any advice on what additional steps I can take to make this bill become law.

Sincerely,

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(name #1)

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(address #1)

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(name #2)

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(address #2)

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(name #3)

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(name #6)

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(address #6)



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## Support the *Paycheck Fairness Act* (S.862 / H.R. 1619)

- Women who work full time still earn, on average, only 77 cents for every dollar men earn. The statistics are even worse for women of color. African-American women make only 62 cents, and Hispanic women only 54 cents, for every dollar earned by white, non-Hispanic men. These gaps translate into a loss of almost \$20,000 a year for African-American women and almost \$24,000 annually for Hispanic women.
- As a result, women were 35% more likely to live in poverty than men.
- While the Equal Pay Act of 1963 has helped to narrow the wage gap between men and women in our workforce, significant disparities remain and must be addressed.
- The *Paycheck Fairness Act* closes loopholes in the Equal Pay Act of 1963 that have diluted its effectiveness in combating unfair and unequal pay.

We strongly urge you to support S. 862 / H.R. 1614, the *Paycheck Fairness Act*. This critical legislation, which was introduced by Senator Mikulski (MD) and Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (CT), would update and strengthen the Equal Pay Act of 1963, which mandated that employers pay equal wages to men and women who perform substantially the same work. The *Paycheck Fairness Act* closes loopholes in the Equal Pay Act which have diluted its effectiveness in combating unfair and unequal pay. While the Equal Pay Act has helped to narrow the wage gap between men and women in our workforce, significant disparities remain and must be addressed.

Especially in today's economy, more women work outside of the home and their paycheck is a necessary part of their households' resources. Yet all too often women are forced to raise their families on incomes lower than that of male colleagues performing the same jobs. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, women who work full time still earn, on average, only 77 cents for every dollar men earn. In 2008, women were 35 percent more likely to live in poverty than men. The statistics are even worse for women of color. According to data collected by the American Association of University Women, in the United States today, a typical African American woman working full time is paid \$31,658 per year; a similar white man is paid \$50,767 per year; a gap of almost \$20,000.

The *Paycheck Fairness Act* would help remedy this inequity and close this unacceptable gap. We again urge you to do all you can to see that this important legislation is brought up and passed as quickly as possible so that women can begin to have some parity for a day's work. This in turn will help hard working American women, their children and their families gain the economic stability they deserve. Please support the *Paycheck Fairness Act* and work to eliminate this unacceptable gap in pay. We look forward to hearing from you and to learning what more we can do to alleviate this inequity.

Sincerely,

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(address #1)

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