



April 30, 2015

Dear Member of Congress,

As communities of faith united by our common religious traditions and values of justice and compassion, we write to you today to urge you to work with your colleagues to cosponsor the Raise the Wage Act, which would raise the federal minimum wage to \$12.00 an hour by 2020.

The Interreligious Working Group on Domestic Human Needs (DHN) believes that poverty is an insufferable reality. We seek to promote policies that will lead to the elimination of the root causes of poverty, as well as those policies that provide support and help for those experiencing poverty in the meantime. Participants in DHN collaborate together in order to coordinate the work of domestic poverty policy staff from more than twenty faith-based and affiliated organizations and denominations.

We believe that no one in America should work full-time and make only poverty wages. The current federal minimum wage of \$7.25 – last raised almost 6 years ago – cannot meet the needs of low-income families. A worker in a full-time, year-round minimum wage job makes only \$15,080 each year, five thousand dollars below the poverty line for a family of three. The minimum wage is not only an insufficient wage, it is an immoral one.

We also believe low-income workers and their allies should not have to fight to raise the minimum wage again and again. We believe that indexing the minimum wage to the median wage is essential to ensuring that low-wage workers' wages do not stagnate. We would oppose, however, any proposal that locked in increases based on a poverty wage.

Finally, we ask for justice for tipped workers, who labor in exchange for only \$2.13 per hour. The last time the tipped wage was raised was in 1991, almost a quarter century ago. This indignity cannot stand, and so we support eliminating the subminimum wage for tipped workers.

As strong supporters of the Raise the Wage Act, we call on you and your colleagues to put an end to poverty wages in America. We urge Congress to pass strong minimum wage legislation, which would lift workers and their families out of poverty, tie the minimum wage to the median wage, and eliminate the subminimum wage for tipped workers.

Sincerely,

Bread for the World
Ecumenical Poverty Initiative
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Ignatian Solidarity Network
Islamic Relief USA
Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
National Council of Jewish Women

NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
The Office of Social Justice of the Christian Reformed Church
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas – Institute Justice Team
Union for Reform Judaism
United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries
The United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society