

It is Time to Raise the Minimum Wage!

It's been a decade since the federal minimum wage has increased. Meanwhile, the cost of living has continually increased for working Americans. For many Americans, working 40 hours or more a week is not enough to support themselves and their families. Airline employees, call center workers, retail store employees, and bank workers work full time for some of the most highly profitable corporations, but many still earn poverty level wages. Workers' productivity has risen by over 70 percent in the last four decades, but our wages have only increased by 11 percent over the same time period.

At a time when wage stagnation and income inequality hold back our families and our economy, the Raise the Wage Act will begin to reverse that cycle and raise pay broadly, especially for the most vulnerable member of the workforce. Specifically, the **Raise the Wage Act of 2019** will:

- Raise the federal minimum wage to \$8.55 this year and increase it over the next five years until it reaches \$15 an hour in 2024
- Adjust each year to keep pace with growth of inflation after 2024
- Phase out the subminimum wage for tipped workers, individuals with disabilities and workers younger than 20 years old.

According to the Economic Policy Institute, this Act will deliver long-overdue raises to more than 1 in 4 workers, 90% of whom are over the age of 20. Raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour will give roughly 40 million workers a pay increase, which is nearly 30% of the workforce.

Boosting pay puts money into the hands of workers who would in turn help create jobs from the growing demand. With more income, we can buy homes, cars and support small businesses in our neighborhoods, cities and states. Our entire country succeeds when we create good jobs with livable wages, empower working people through unions, and invest in our future.

By raising the minimum wage, we can ensure that working people are compensated fairly for their work, reduce poverty and income inequality, and help grow the economy. All workers deserve to earn a living wage so we can all live with dignity and respect.

The House of Representatives passed the Raise the Wage Act in July 2019 and now it is up to the Senate to raise the wages for low income workers and ensure the economy works for everyone, not just the 1%. It's time we recognize the value of all workers who build our economy.