

AFL-CIO

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

March 5, 2019

The Honorable Robert C. Scott, Chairman
The Honorable Virginia Foxx, Ranking Member
House Committee on Education and Labor
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Scott and Ranking Member Foxx:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I am writing to urge you to vote for the “Raise the Wage Act of 2019” (HR 582) when it is marked up in the Education and Labor Committee tomorrow. This legislation would gradually raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour by the year 2024. In addition to indexing future increases to the growth in the median wage, the bill would gradually eliminate the subminimum wage for tipped workers, which has been stuck at \$2.13 since 1991.

Because Congress has not raised the minimum wage in more than 10 years, millions of our nation’s full time workers live in poverty. If the minimum wage had risen at the same pace as productivity growth since 1969, it would be over \$20 an hour today.

Phasing in a \$15 minimum wage would benefit 41 million workers and begin to address the growing crisis of wage inequality. More than half of the workers who would benefit are adults between the ages of 25 and 54, and nearly two-thirds work full time. More than half (56 percent) are women, nearly 30 percent of whom have children.

According to the Economic Policy Institute, by 2024 a single adult without children will need at least \$31,200 (\$15 per hour on an annual basis) to achieve an adequate standard of living in all parts of the country. Allowing for a lower regional minimum wage, as some have suggested, would lock millions of workers into poverty, and would be especially harmful to people of color and women who would benefit most from a minimum wage increase. We strongly urge you to oppose any effort to authorize regional variations in the federal minimum wage.

Multiple studies have shown that modest increases in the minimum wage have not resulted in significant job loss, and the income boost experienced by low-income families benefits the country overall by reducing both poverty and income inequality.

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

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RICHARD L. TRUMKA
PRESIDENT

ELIZABETH H. SHULER
SECRETARY-TREASURER

TEFERE GEBRE
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

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Raising the minimum wage to \$15 has the support of an overwhelming majority of Americans, and the benefits far exceed any potential cost. Once again, we urge you to vote for the “Raise the Wage Act” of 2019.

Sincerely,



William Samuel
Government Affairs Department

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