



July 28, 2015

United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Charities USA, we write to lift up the struggles of low-wage workers and their families. We urge you to advance legislation and policies that would ensure fair and just wages for all workers, and in doing so improve the financial security of millions of American families.

An economy thrives only when it is centered on the dignity and well-being of the workers and families in it. As pastors and service providers, we see every day the consequences when society fails to honor this priority. A full-year, full-time worker earning the federal minimum wage does not make enough to raise a child free from poverty. Because the federal minimum wage is a static number and does not change, each year it becomes more difficult for low-wage workers to make ends meet. This leads to increased demand for Charities' services and reliance on the social safety net to make ends meet. Indeed, recent research suggests that about three-fourths (73 percent) of those who receive public benefits come from working families, meaning they or a family member is employed.

Saint John Paul II pointed out, "society and the State must ensure wage levels adequate for the maintenance of the worker and his family, including a certain amount for savings. This requires a continuous effort to improve workers' training and capability so that their work will be more skilled and productive, as well as careful controls and adequate legislative measures to block shameful forms of exploitation, especially to the disadvantage of the most vulnerable workers. . . (*Centesimus Annus*, no. 15).

Protecting low-wage workers and promoting their ability to form and nurture families are shared responsibilities and critical to building a more equitable society. One way Congress can contribute to this shared work of promoting the common good is by ensuring the federal minimum wage promotes family formation and stability.

Sincerely,

Most Reverend Thomas G. Wenski  
Chairman  
Committee on Domestic Justice  
and Human Development

Sister Donna Markham, OP, Ph.D.  
President  
Catholic Charities USA



July 28, 2015

United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

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