



# American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

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## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

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### The Fight for \$15: Raise the Wage

Since the 2008 Great Recession, 99% of all new income has gone to the wealthiest one percent of Americans. All the while, the working class continues to fall further behind as income inequality explodes and wages stagnate.

American wages, and especially the federal minimum wage, remain outrageously low. At the current federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour, a full-time worker earns only \$15,080 each year. There is no place in the U.S. where a full-time salary at the current federal minimum wage can provide for housing, food and other essentials. America needs to do better.

#### A Rising Tide

Throughout the 20th century, rising wages have lifted up the working class and our nation as a whole. However, in recent decades, as the American economy has expanded and workers produce more and more, the federal minimum wage has fallen drastically behind increases in workers' productivity. Furthermore, the federal minimum wage has remained stagnant as the cost of living has increased annually, making it immensely difficult for low wage workers to provide for their families.

An increase in the minimum wage will lift millions of workers out of poverty and provide a boon to our economy.

There is broad support nationwide for raising the wage. A majority of surveyed Americans support a \$15 an hour minimum wage, with 29 states and the District of Columbia having minimum wages above the federal \$7.25 threshold. Several states and cities are leading the way, implementing their own \$15 an hour minimum wage.

The rising tide of higher pay is also lifting businesses in these communities. Commenting on his increased sales after Seattle raised its minimum wage, a local entrepreneur stated, "It isn't because I'm such a great manager or smart guy, but the buying public has more money in their pocket."



#### A Crisis for Essential Workers

When the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted life in the United States in early 2020, essential workers were expected to do their jobs with inadequate pay and weak workplace protections. Many of those essential workers are minimum and low-wage earners, which includes fast-food workers, waitstaff, and those who work in residential/nursing care facilities.

We are long overdue for an increase in the federal minimum wage. America's working class deserves living wages, not starvation wages. With the passage of the bill, over 10% of Americans would see an increase in pay, lifting 1.3 million Americans out of poverty and, in turn, reducing racial and gender pay inequality. Once enacted, this translates to a pay increase of \$3,300 for the average worker.

#### Opposition Claims Refuted

Opponents of raising the wage falsely claim that the minimum wage primarily impacts teenagers. In reality, 9 in 10 workers who stand to benefit from a \$15 minimum wage are over age 20, and the average age of impacted workers is 36. Further, working parents constitute over 27% of those who stand to benefit. Counter to assertions by some, studies show that raising the minimum wages does not hinder job creation. In fact, a landmark study found economic activity, consumer spending, and employment actually increased after implementing the increase.

#### Raise the Wage Act of 2021 (H.R. 603/S. 53)

The Raise the Wage Act of 2021, introduced by Representative Bobby Scott (D-VA-03) and Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT), would incrementally raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2025. Further, it would then be indexed to rise with inflation to prevent low wage workers from falling behind as they have in recent decades. This bill has amassed 202 cosponsors in the House and 38 cosponsors in the Senate.

**APWU endorses the Raise the Wage Act of 2021 (H.R. 603/S. 53) and encourages lawmakers to stand up for America's working class by cosponsoring this important legislation.**

Contact the APWU Legislative and Political Department at (202) 842-4211 for more information  
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