

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wednesday, March 4, 2015
11:00 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN W. WILSON GOODE, JR., CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL
COUNCILMAN KENYATTA JOHNSON
COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA

RESOLUTION 141039 - Resolution authorizing the
Philadelphia City Council Committee on
Commerce and Economic Development to hold
hearings regarding increasing the minimum wage
to \$15 an hour in the City of Philadelphia.

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COUNCILMAN GOODE: Good morning. This hearing is called to order. This is a public hearing of the Commerce and Economic Development Committee on Resolution No. 141039. My name is W. Wilson Goode, Jr., Chair of this Committee.

A quorum is not necessary, but members are present. To my immediate left is Councilman Kenyatta Johnson, the primary sponsor of the resolution. To his left is Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown. Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell was here and will be back.

The title of Resolution No. 141039, authorizing the Philadelphia City Council Committee on Commerce and Economic Development to hold hearings regarding increasing the minimum wage to \$15 an hour in the City of Philadelphia.

Councilman Johnson, the primary sponsor, has some opening remarks.

COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to thank you for

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2 scheduling this hearing on this most
3 critically and important issue. I'd like
4 to also thank Councilwoman Jannie
5 Blackwell for being here today. I'd like
6 to also thank Councilwoman Blondell
7 Reynolds for being here today and, most
8 importantly, I'd like to thank the public
9 for being here today as we discuss,
10 debate the dialogue on raising the
11 minimum wage here in the City of
12 Philadelphia to \$15 an hour.

13 Philadelphia is the poorest big
14 city in America. One point five million
15 Philadelphians here live in poverty.
16 Over one-quarter of the population lives
17 in poverty and 12 percent live in deep
18 poverty. Almost one-third of all
19 families with children in the City of
20 Philadelphia live in poverty.

21 Poverty in the City of
22 Philadelphia is an epidemic. We need to
23 act now to ensure that we address poverty
24 in Philadelphia. In Philadelphia, a
25 worker making the minimum wage and

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2 working full time will make \$15,000 in
3 one year, which is below the poverty
4 threshold for a family of three, which is
5 \$19,000 a year. Contrary to popular
6 belief, low-wage jobs are not merely
7 stepping stones for young workers on
8 their path to higher-paying employment.
9 The average person making minimum wage is
10 35 years old.

11 Everyone who works full time
12 should have the ability to support their
13 family. A full-time worker making \$15 an
14 hour will earn about \$31,000 a year.

15 (Interruption by loud bang.)

16 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I'm
17 starting to think the powers that be
18 don't want this -- we had the fire alarm
19 and now...

20 This is also a social justice
21 issue. Women constitute nearly
22 two-thirds of all minimum wage workers
23 here in the City and one-third of them
24 are minorities. If we are serious about
25 equal rights in Philadelphia, we need to

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2 address poverty, including poverty among
3 full-time workers.

4 You will hear testimony today
5 from experts with data suggesting that a
6 raise in the minimum wage will not hurt
7 local businesses or cost the City money.
8 Raising the minimum wage will benefit
9 Philadelphia's economy, because
10 Philadelphians with money in their pocket
11 will spend that money on local businesses
12 that sell their goods and services. We
13 will hear more about that today.

14 Higher wages also decrease
15 turnover and increase worker morale.
16 Raising the minimum wage will save
17 Philadelphia money, because families who
18 are able to climb out of poverty will
19 rely less on social services and cost
20 taxpayer dollars.

21 As cities and states throughout
22 the country move to raise the minimum
23 wage so that their citizens can climb out
24 of poverty, Philadelphia must not fall
25 further behind. And as we move forward

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2 in the City, we have events that will be
3 taking place such as the Democratic
4 National Convention and also the World
5 Day of Families where we will bring the
6 Pope here to the City of Philadelphia.
7 But this is one of the most critically
8 and important issues that we must face as
9 a city, which is raising people out of
10 poverty, helping people be able to move
11 into the middle class but, most
12 importantly, advocating for those most in
13 need.

14 So I want to thank Councilman
15 Wilson Goode, who is the Chair of this
16 Committee, for allowing me to have this
17 particular hearing on an issue that's
18 critical and dear to my heart. So at
19 this particular time, we're going to call
20 up the first witness.

21 (Applause.)

22 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you,
23 Councilman.

24 Are there any other comments
25 from --

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2 (Audience member yelling.)

3 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Excuse me.

4 (Audience member yelling.)

5 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Excuse me.

6 Are there any other comments

7 from members of the Committee?

8 (No response.)

9 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Seeing none,
10 our first panel is on impact on community
11 and public good. Our first witness is
12 Mark Price, also Professor Jeanette
13 Wicks-Lim, and Stephanie Luce.

14 (Witnesses approached witness
15 table.)

16 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Please state
17 your name for the record, proceed with
18 your testimony. And we will take
19 testimony from the entire panel before we
20 ask any questions.

21 DR. PRICE: My name is Mark
22 Price. I'm a labor economist at the
23 Keystone Research Center based in
24 Harrisburg. We are an economic think
25 tank that focuses on worker issues, in

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2 particular wage and income trends in
3 Pennsylvania. I also have a Ph.D. in
4 economics from the University of Utah.

5 So I thank you very much for the
6 opportunity to testify before you today
7 on trends and wages in Pennsylvania and
8 the need to raise wages in this state.
9 And I want to thank you. Usually when I
10 testify, there's a big thunder clap. So
11 that's now been taken out of the way, so
12 I appreciate that.

13 If people in the local
14 community don't earn enough to pay for
15 food, rent, and transportation, the basic
16 necessities of life, that undermines the
17 health of the local economy. And we have
18 had a situation in -- and consumer
19 spending really is the power and the
20 driver of this city's economy. And over
21 the last three decades, we have seen very
22 little growth in wages from most workers,
23 and that's true in the country and it's
24 true in the City of Philadelphia.

25 This trend not only zapped the

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2 vitality of the local economy, but it has
3 also crushed the middle class in this
4 city. In 1979, 54 percent of the
5 households in this city managed to earn
6 enough to get into the City's middle
7 class. Today that figure stands at 43
8 percent.

9 Powerful corporations have used
10 their influence to hold down wages, and
11 in the process, they've created an
12 economy with economy-busting jobs instead
13 of economy-boosting jobs. As a result,
14 there's been a rapid rise in income
15 inequality in this city.

16 In 1978, the top 1 percent of
17 earners in the City of Philadelphia took
18 home roughly 9 cents of every dollar of
19 income. Today that figure stands at
20 roughly 20 cents of every dollar of
21 income in this city. That's a doubling
22 of their income share, and it has a lot
23 to do with these trends, an economy that
24 is shifting income increasingly towards
25 the top and not generating wage growth

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for everyone else. And that's a problem in particular because we live in a world, as you all know very well, where one of the most important ingredients to a successful political campaign is access to money. And in an economy with economy-busting jobs and rapid growth in top incomes, working families increasingly have difficulty getting access to the public sector and getting the policies that benefit them.

The public sector has an important role to play in the issue here of wages, because it has the power to set the wage floor in this economy, and raising the wage floor can boost spending. The catch is that the public sector, in particular the federal government, has over the last 35 years allowed the minimum wage to lose roughly 25 percent of its purchasing power. The end result is not just lowering the wages of folks earning right at the minimum, but really operating like quicksand and

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2 pulling down the wages of the bottom 20
3 percent of workers in the State of
4 Pennsylvania at-large and certainly in
5 Philadelphia.

6 So I think a step in the right
7 direction would be for the State of
8 Pennsylvania to raise the minimum wage to
9 10.10 an hour. Our estimates at the
10 Keystone Research Center are that that
11 would raise the wages for roughly 1.2
12 million workers in Pennsylvania, boosting
13 total wages by \$1.8 billion and, as a
14 result, generating an increase in
15 spending and jobs of roughly 6,000 jobs
16 in the overall economy.

17 The impact here in
18 Philadelphia, roughly 133,000 workers
19 would see their wages rise with a minimum
20 wage of \$10.10 an hour. And I think one
21 of the things that the Raise the Wage
22 Coalition, which is led by the
23 Philadelphia Unemployment Project, is
24 advocating for in Harrisburg today is
25 that we eliminate the preemption, which

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2 is a policy of the General Assembly which
3 prohibits cities like Philadelphia from
4 setting their own minimum wage. And this
5 would be in particular very important for
6 you, because although 10.10 certainly
7 would be appropriate for the State of
8 Pennsylvania as a whole, a city like
9 Philadelphia does have a higher cost of
10 living. So we would recommend that you
11 adopt a higher minimum wage if we can
12 manage to get that preemption removed.

13 (Applause.)

14 DR. PRICE: Thank you very
15 much.

16 Just to close up, I think
17 raising the wage floor is important and
18 necessary, but I want to emphasize that
19 the only guarantee of more broadly shared
20 prosperity in this city and in the rest
21 of the country really at the end of the
22 day comes from workers having access to a
23 union. In this economy when wages
24 rise --

25 (Applause.)

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2 DR. PRICE: In this economy
3 we've seen rapid increases, as other
4 folks will testify today, in
5 productivity, but it hasn't shown up in
6 rising wages. It has absolutely raised
7 profits. It has absolutely raised
8 incomes at the top. It has not raised
9 wages, and one reason is because of the
10 absence of unions. And what we need are
11 workers and janitors, fast food
12 restaurants to get access to a union
13 and --

14 (Applause.)

15 DR. PRICE: So to settle up, we
16 think a minimum wage increase certainly
17 would be warranted above 10.10 for the
18 City of Philadelphia, and certainly we
19 hope that you'd be supportive of
20 continued efforts to organize workers in
21 fast food and other industries to help
22 raise wages.

23 Thank you.

24 (Applause.)

25 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you

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2 for your testimony, Mr. Price.

3 Let me note for the record
4 Councilman Mark Squilla, Vice Chair of
5 the Committee, is here as well.

6 The next witness can state your
7 name for the record and please proceed
8 with your testimony.

9 PROFESSOR WICKS-LIM: Hi. My
10 name is Jeannette Wicks-Lim. Thank you
11 to the members of the Committee on
12 Commerce and Economic Development for the
13 opportunity to testify before you about a
14 \$15 minimum wage in Philadelphia. My
15 name is Jeanette Wicks-Lim. I'm
16 Assistant Research Professor at the
17 Political Economy Research Institute at
18 the University of Massachusetts in
19 Amherst. My research primarily focuses
20 on the low-wage market in the U.S. I
21 have specifically studied minimum and
22 living wage laws in the U.S. for over ten
23 years at the federal, state, and local
24 level, including Santa Monica,
25 California; Santa Fe and Albuquerque, New

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Mexico; Sonoma County, California;
Milwaukee County, Wisconsin; national
Tennessee; and the states of Arizona and
Florida. Much of this research is
compiled in a 2008 book titled "A Measure
of Fairness," which was published by
Cornell University Press and co-authored
by Robert Pollin, Mark Brenner, Stephanie
Luce, who is also testifying here today,
and myself.

In my testimony today I'd like
to make three basic points about a \$15
minimum wage policy for Philadelphia.
First, I just want to put the political
demands for a \$15 minimum wage in the
historical context. The fact that a \$15
minimum represents a historically high
jump, a 107 percent increase over the
current 7.25 federal minimum, reflects
this fact about today's labor market:
Wages for most workers, but particularly
for those at the low end, have failed to
increase even while their productivity
and skills have improved and the U.S.

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economy has grown more prosperous.

The fact is that the link between workers' wages and worker productivity broke about 40 years ago. Prior to that, workers' wages ticked upwards in line with worker productivity. And in my written testimony there's a figure you can take a look at which has a pretty clear picture.

On average, workers shared in the benefits of the growing U.S. economy. From about 1948 to 1979, average workers saw their pay grow 93 percent. Worker productivity basically increased by a similar amount, about 108 percent.

But from 1979 to 2013, this changed. Hourly pay only rose 8.2 percent, even while worker productivity rose by another 65 percent. The lowest paid workers in the U.S. have basically seen no net improvement in their wages since 1979. That is a long time for your wages not to grow. In fact, over these years, not only did worker productivity

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2 increase significantly, the percentage of
3 adult workers getting some college
4 experience also rose by more than 20
5 percentage points, from 41 percent to 64
6 percent. So workers are clearly getting
7 more skills.

8 So consider this: If the
9 minimum wage had kept pace with worker
10 productivity from its inflation-adjusted
11 peak value in 1968, the minimum wage
12 today would be over \$20.

13 (Applause.)

14 PROFESSOR WICKS-LIM: In other
15 words, a \$15 minimum wage represents a
16 significant raise for the lowest paid
17 workers precisely because wages,
18 including especially those at the lower
19 end, have basically been stagnant for
20 much of the past 40 years. This is why
21 today a \$15 minimum wage is so
22 noteworthy. It's not because a \$15
23 minimum wage is high relative to the
24 prosperity that is generated by the U.S.
25 economy, but rather because workers'

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2 wages have fallen so far behind.

3 The second point I want to make
4 is about the concern that there's this
5 basic tradeoff between employment and
6 minimum wages; that is, that higher
7 minimum wages raise labor costs to
8 employers so much, they're forced to cut
9 back on jobs and, as a result, low-wage
10 workers are made worse off. This aspect
11 of minimum wage laws have been one of the
12 most debated and really contentiously
13 debated issues in economics. My view of
14 the empirical research on this question
15 shows that our country's history of
16 experience with minimum wage laws has
17 demonstrated on average no economic
18 significant impact on employment.

19 Now, this immediately raises
20 the question, Well, how do employers
21 adjust to higher minimum wages if they
22 don't reduce their workforce. Since,
23 after all, basic law of demand in
24 economics is clear that raising the price
25 of anything, in this case low-wage

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workers, will reduce demand for that thing, all else equal. But the fact is, when a minimum wage goes up, all else does not remain equal. This goes to what you were saying earlier, Councilmember. First, the workers who get raises become more attached to their jobs, reducing worker turnover. This saves employers money by reducing their spending on hiring, recruiting, and training new workers.

Second, businesses operate in the context of a wider economy, and this gets to what Mark was speaking about. If the economy is growing, as is typically the case and is in the case now, then businesses' revenues tend to rise by virtue of operating in a healthy economy. This normal revenue growth can help offset costs associated with a minimum wage hike just as it would with any other increase in the cost of doing business.

Moreover, in the context of a healthy economy, businesses can raise

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2 their prices modestly, and this can
3 generate even more revenue growth to
4 cover any cost increases. In other
5 words, businesses have available
6 alternative adjustment channels to
7 minimum wage increases aside from laying
8 off workers.

9 And, finally, it's important to
10 note that laying off workers has its own
11 cost for employers, especially under
12 normal economic conditions when the
13 economy is growing. In this context,
14 economies are facing increasing demand
15 for their products and services and
16 cutting back on staff is going to make it
17 harder for them to deliver the same level
18 of service at the same quality.

19 Now, as I mentioned earlier,
20 passing the wage hikes have typically
21 been more modest than what a 15 minimum
22 wage would require, and we don't have
23 that much experience with a minimum wage
24 hike of this size. So this brings me to
25 my final point.

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2 In developing a proposal for a
3 \$15 minimum wage, it will be important
4 for us to use what we know about how
5 businesses have adjusted to minimum wages
6 in the past or to what extent they can do
7 this and thinking about what we can do to
8 make sure that jobs aren't lost. So this
9 is exactly the kind of exercise that my
10 colleague, Bob Pollin, Dr. Robert Pollin,
11 and I did in thinking about a national
12 \$15 minimum wage. We were trying to
13 think about what would be an economically
14 feasible policy for a \$15 minimum wage.

15 We used reasonable assumptions
16 based on research on how businesses
17 adjusted to minimum wage hikes in the
18 past and we determined that even the most
19 low-wage, labor-intensive businesses,
20 fast food restaurants, could adjust to a
21 \$15 minimum wage without laying off
22 workers or even cutting into their profit
23 margins. This research is available in
24 our working paper on our website, on the
25 PERI website, and it's titled "A \$15

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2 Minimum Wage: How the Fast Food Industry
3 Could Adjust Without Shedding Jobs."

4 Basically what we find is that
5 fast food restaurants can use cost
6 savings from lower turnover and increased
7 revenue from higher prices in normal
8 revenue growth to cover the cost of the
9 phased-in \$15 minimum wage. We present a
10 scenario through which the minimum wage
11 would rise to 10.50 in the first year and
12 then rise to \$15 per hour three years
13 later.

14 Now, we base our analysis using
15 national wage data, but according to
16 Labor Department data on the Philadelphia
17 region, especially when we look at fast
18 food workers' wages, they look very much
19 like the national picture. So our
20 scenario for the national economy may
21 very well apply to the Philadelphia
22 economy.

23 So I urge the Committee of
24 Commerce and Economic Development to
25 consider seriously how a \$15 minimum wage

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2 policy could be crafted for the City of
3 Philadelphia in order to finally bring
4 meaningful wage growth to its low-wage
5 workers and substantially improve their
6 living standards.

7 Thank you for allowing me to
8 testify.

9 (Applause.)

10 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you
11 for your testimony.

12 Please state your name for the
13 record and proceed.

14 PROFESSOR LUCE: Yes. Hi.

15 Good morning. My name is Stephanie Luce.
16 I'm a Professor of Labor Studies at the
17 Murphy Institute, City University of New
18 York. I've been studying low-wage work
19 and wage standards for over 20 years,
20 including at the U.S. Department of
21 Labor, Office of Policy, and the
22 University of Massachusetts, and now at
23 CUNY. I've co-authored three books on
24 the topic of living wage and minimum wage
25 and several dozen articles and reports.

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I'm here today to speak in favor of setting a citywide minimum wage in the City of Philadelphia because I believe our research shows that it can benefit the City in multiple ways. Because of my time, I'll just focus on one particular aspect today, which is the impact on the public budget and the public good, and in particular, I want to focus on two ways that this is relevant.

The first is ways in which low-wage workers must rely on government programs. Today, over a quarter of the U.S. workforce earns a wage that is not enough to meet the federal poverty line for a full-time worker with a family. Millions of workers qualify for a range of federal and state programs, and some employers actively encourage low-wage workers to rely on those programs in order to cover their basic costs. A number of studies have begun to quantify the amount of public services utilized by low-wage workers.

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2 In my own work on retail work,
3 we found in New York City that only 29
4 percent of retail workers receive health
5 insurance through their employer. That
6 means over 70 percent of workers go
7 without health insurance, but one-third
8 of those rely on government programs for
9 health, their healthcare needs. If the
10 proportions are similar, that means over
11 47,000 workers here in Philadelphia just
12 in the retail sector rely on government
13 programs for healthcare.

14 In another study, we found that
15 if Walmart were to expand in New York
16 City to the same degree that it has
17 elsewhere, it could cost taxpayers over
18 \$4 million per year in health insurance
19 costs alone. Other studies have found
20 similar results in other places. For
21 example, a UC Berkeley study found that
22 only 13 percent of fast food workers
23 receive health benefits from their
24 employer. These are just healthcare
25 costs, but low-wage workers, of course,

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2 rely on a wide range of programs, and in
3 these industries they turn to the public
4 sector to meet their needs.

5 So, for example, fast food
6 workers nationwide utilize nearly \$7
7 billion worth of public subsidies in
8 order to make ends meet. This includes
9 federal and state expenditures on
10 Medicaid, CHIP, Earned Income Tax
11 Credits, food stamps, and TANF. It does
12 not even include a wide range of other
13 programs such as Section 8 housing, WIC,
14 heating assistance and others.

15 And so this suggests that
16 low-wage work has an impact on the public
17 budget because low-wage workers have to
18 turn to government programs to survive.

19 While we think government
20 programs are great, we don't want to
21 eliminate them. We don't want to use
22 them to subsidize low-wage employers, and
23 low-wage employers should not be able to
24 use this as a strategy instead of raising
25 wages.

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2 (Applause.)

3 PROFESSOR LUCE: And to that
4 extent, public programs such as these
5 should be used only as a complement and
6 not as a substitute for higher wages.

7 The second point I want to
8 focus on is the public cost of keeping
9 jobs low -- keeping wages low, and my two
10 colleagues have touched on this, so I
11 will just add a small bit on this point.

12 So in addition to the cost of
13 public subsidies, low-wage jobs have an
14 indirect cost for communities by
15 suppressing economic activity. Critics
16 claim that raising wages cuts jobs, but
17 there's lots of evidence to suggest that
18 the reverse is true. When wages go up,
19 low-wage workers spend their earnings on
20 goods and services mostly in the local
21 community. This generates demand and new
22 activity. Employers will hire people to
23 meet that new activity and new demand.

24 Increasingly, we have studies
25 to show that increasing wages can lead to

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economic activity. A 2014 survey of small businesses found that the greatest job growth was in states and metropolitan areas with the highest minimum wages; for example, Washington state and the City of San Francisco. The Department of Labor found that the 13 states that have recently increased their state minimum wage had higher job growth than the states that did not. And, in fact, Washington state has had the highest minimum wage for about 15 years, and each year it's had job growth that surpassed the national average rate of job growth.

So in conclusion, low-wage workers -- low wages can be costly in both direct and indirect ways. Low wages are not only a problem for individual workers and their families, but have negative impacts on the public budget and the macro economy. By raising its minimum wage, the City of Philadelphia can help reduce the degree to which workers must rely on public programs and

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2 it could help spur job creation.

3 Thank you.

4 (Applause.)

5 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you

6 for your testimony.

7 Are there questions for this

8 panel?

9 Councilman Johnson.

10 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you

11 for your testimony. Professor Lim, could

12 you go back and just elaborate on

13 productivity and the lack of wages rising

14 as a result of the growth of our economy.

15 PROFESSOR WICKS-LIM: Yeah.

16 Well, this is a pretty well-documented

17 trend if you look over the history of the

18 U.S. labor market. I wish I could just

19 pull up the picture and show all of you.

20 It's kind of remarkable how in the

21 decades prior to 1979, you really saw

22 worker productivity and workers' wages,

23 the average worker's wage, rising

24 together. So that indicated that as the

25 economy was growing, the workers together

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2 being more productive, that workers were
3 getting a share of that growing economy.

4 Now, after 1979, you see these
5 two trends just break apart from each
6 other, where you see productivity, worker
7 productivity, continuing to increase, but
8 workers' wages really flattening out. I
9 mean, you really -- the line becomes
10 almost a straight line across, and that's
11 from 1979 to 2013, the latest data I've
12 looked at, where you just see wages
13 adjusted for inflation basically going
14 nowhere.

15 For the average worker, it went
16 up about 9 percent, but when you look at
17 the lower wage percentiles, workers
18 earning at the lower end of the wage
19 distribution, you actually see their
20 wages basically not increasing at all in
21 inflation adjusted. So even while the
22 economy is producing more output and
23 services per person and even while
24 workers are producing more output per
25 hour, the workers at the low end of the

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2 wage distribution are not receiving any
3 of those gains. They are simply staying
4 at the same exact place they were in 1979
5 as they are now and compared to where
6 they are now today at 2013.

7 Does that help?

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you.

9 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Are there
10 any other questions from members of this
11 panel?

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Seeing none,
14 thank you very much.

15 Our next panel will deal
16 with --

17 (Applause.)

18 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Our next
19 panel will deal with impact on individual
20 lives. Justin Murden, Aliya Stimpson,
21 Raphael Curtis and Shymara Jones, Audrey
22 Traynham, and Wende Marshall.

23 (Applause.)

24 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Good
25 morning. Please approach the witness

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2 table.

3 Someone has to come to the

4 table.

5 (Witnesses approached witness

6 table.)

7 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Good morning

8 again. Please state your name for the

9 record and proceed with your testimony.

10 And we will take testimony from the

11 entire panel before questions. Please

12 proceed.

13 MS. JONES: Shymara Jones.

14 MR. CURTIS: Raphael Curtis.

15 MS. JONES: Hi and thank you

16 for having me here today. Like I said,

17 my name is Shymara Jones and I am 21. I

18 have been working at Popeyes for over

19 five years now and I only make 7.60.

20 I've been fighting for \$15 an hour and

21 the right to form a union for over a year

22 now.

23 (Applause.)

24 MR. CURTIS: My name is Raphael

25 Curtis and I've been in and out of the

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2 fast food industry for a few years. I am
3 also involved in the Fight for 15. I'm
4 24 years old and a father to a beautiful
5 two-year-old girl, Kayla.

6 The low wages that these
7 corporations pay us make it impossible to
8 support our families. My daughter asked
9 to go to Chuck E. Cheese and I have to
10 say to her no because I can't afford it.
11 Do you know what that feels like, to feel
12 inadequate as a father? It's not fair,
13 but it's not my fault. These
14 multi-billion-dollar companies and the
15 government are to blame. Someone needs
16 to step up.

17 (Applause.)

18 MS. JONES: I also have a
19 two-year-old son, Jaden. It's hard to
20 make ends meet off these low-wage jobs.
21 He needs Pull-Ups and clothes, and it
22 feels like he grows every other week.
23 Most importantly, though, I worry about
24 what kind of jobs are available to him
25 when he grows up. No matter what I do,

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2 no matter what kind of education he gets,
3 there's like a 50/50 chance of him
4 working a low-wage or retail job.

5 MR. CURTIS: They say the
6 economy is growing, but it's only these
7 multi-billion-dollar industries that
8 don't want to pay a living wage. When we
9 went 15 in our union, I'll --

10 (Applause.)

11 MR. CURTIS: -- I'll be able to
12 breathe a sigh of relief. I'll know that
13 I'll be able to adequately provide for my
14 family, and I know that my daughter will
15 be able to enter the job market and be
16 able to sustain herself no matter what
17 kind of job she has.

18 MS. JONES: We need 15 now for
19 ourselves. We need 15 now for our
20 families and for our children's future.
21 We are going to keep organizing for \$15
22 an hour and the right to form a union,
23 and we're going to keep putting pressure
24 on these fast food giants, but the City
25 of Philadelphia needs to step up and

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2 support us.

3 (Applause.)

4 MS. JONES: We have gone on

5 strike, we have petitioned our bosses and

6 corporates, and we have been arrested

7 doing non-violent civil disobedience to

8 win \$15 an hour and a union. All we're

9 asking of is for City Council and to

10 simply to vote for the raise the

11 entire -- I'm sorry. We need to vote for

12 this raise that the entire City needs.

13 Thank you.

14 (Applause.)

15 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you

16 for your testimony.

17 Will the other witnesses

18 approach the witness table.

19 (Witnesses approached witness

20 table.)

21 (Applause.)

22 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Good morning

23 again. Please state your name for the

24 record and proceed with your testimony.

25 MR. MURDEN: Hello. My name is

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2 Justin Murden.

3 MS. STIMPSON: Good morning.

4 My name is Aliya Stimpson.

5 MR. MURDEN: I'm a low-wage
6 worker and a proud member of 15 Now. I
7 support a \$15 minimum wage in
8 Philadelphia.

9 I was born and grew up in
10 Southwest Philly and I have 13 brothers
11 and sisters. I graduated from John
12 Bartram High School, and I hope to attend
13 Indiana University of Pennsylvania; that
14 is, if I save up enough money to pay off
15 tuition.

16 I currently have two jobs, one
17 in a bar and restaurant downtown and one
18 doing security. Each of my jobs pay less
19 than \$9 an hour. Outside of work I still
20 dedicate many hours of my week in the
21 campaign to raise the minimum wage to \$15
22 an hour.

23 Philly workers need \$15 an
24 hour, and I am doing everything I can to
25 make sure we win \$15 as soon as possible.

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2 (Applause.)

3 MR. MURDEN: I'm here today to
4 speak on behalf of City Council to ask
5 them to help to fight -- in this fight.

6 For workers like me, the math
7 doesn't add up. Between two jobs, I make
8 around \$1,200 a month, and a TransPass is
9 \$91. That's a month TransPass too.
10 Renting a one-bedroom apartment costs
11 \$1,000. Then when you add up food,
12 clothes, utilities and the money for the
13 month is over.

14 I am working a full-time job
15 and I do not have enough money to meet
16 most of my basic needs. Even \$15 an hour
17 isn't enough for many, but it's a step in
18 the right direction.

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. MURDEN: My sister is
21 working two low-wage jobs. She has a
22 daughter, trying to move out on her own.
23 The closest resourceful place that she
24 found is \$500 in Camden. Now, it's too
25 far from where she works at, and my

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2 family fears for her safety. She works
3 at Sam's Club, also operated by Walmart,
4 and a day care center. She travels far
5 to get to her jobs, but also makes less
6 than \$15 an hour.

7 As a young man with 13 brothers
8 and sisters, family is the most important
9 thing to me. Growing up I wanted to have
10 a family of my own. I wanted to buy a
11 car, buy a nice house. I wanted to get
12 married, have children, the basic family
13 needs. But it might not work out.
14 However, my mom, she works for SEPTA. My
15 dad is a Philadelphia police officer and
16 my step-dad works for Delta. They all
17 have union members with middle-class jobs
18 that pays them enough to raise a large
19 happy family.

20 Philadelphia families, like my
21 own, were built on the foundation of
22 unions and collective bargaining.

23 Growing up --

24 (Applause.)

25 MR. MURDEN: -- I thought jobs

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2 like my parents' would be available to me
3 too, but unfortunately I was wrong.

4 Many of my peers and I are
5 caught in the cycle of poverty. I am
6 only 19 years old, and I know the rest of
7 my life -- I don't know what the rest of
8 my life has in store for me.

9 I am sitting here as a member
10 of a lost generation. The opportunities
11 for people under 30 today are not the
12 same as generations long ago when unions
13 and workers were strong. The situation
14 is worse for people who look like me. I
15 want to be clear. Young black men and
16 young black women make less money and get
17 worse jobs than other people get. Black
18 workers are discriminated against all the
19 time, and, in fact, in Virginia an entire
20 team of black workers was fired for being
21 "too ghetto" and replaced by white
22 workers.

23 In addition, education in black
24 neighborhoods is terrible. My high
25 school, John Bartram, things were so out

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2 of control that the only place I could
3 focus is in the AFJROTC, the Air Force
4 military program. I went to high school
5 where students were assaulted by
6 teachers. Our school was full of police
7 officers every day. Deans were
8 continually getting fired. The only
9 students that were seriously focused on
10 studying and getting out of school was
11 the seniors. I think my fellow students
12 knew that they weren't in school to be
13 prepared for a good job. They were
14 ignored, because the only thing that was
15 expected of us was to join a low-wage
16 workforce where conditions on the job was
17 chaotic and abusive.

18 To conclude, I remember City
19 Council -- I remind City Council that 15
20 Now is a family values issue. Many
21 families or -- my family is the most
22 important thing in the world to me. The
23 big businesses spending thousands of
24 dollars to fight raising the minimum wage
25 are the same people who said that we need

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2 to value traditional families. But if we
3 want to build a Philadelphia that is a
4 positive environment and for families, we
5 need to raise \$15 now.

6 When I think of family, I want
7 to have my own family one day. I think
8 about getting home in time to have dinner
9 together, sitting around the kitchen
10 table. I think about being able to buy
11 my kids healthy foods, clothes, have the
12 weekends off, and take them on vacations,
13 spend time with them, send them to
14 college. Healthy families are economic
15 stable families. Meanwhile, the CEOs and
16 wealthy families make billions of
17 profits, spend millions to keep wages
18 down and work conditions as dangerous and
19 unstable as possible. Did you know that
20 the CEO of McDonald's makes \$9,000 an
21 hour? I said that, \$9,000 an hour.
22 That's more than I make even at my jobs
23 in a whole year. That's not right.

24 I am confident enough to know
25 that I don't deserve less than young

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2 people in the suburbs. I am going to
3 continue to fight until we are treated
4 the same economically. A minimum wage
5 across all industries will lift up young
6 workers.

7 Today we are here to make three
8 clear demands on City Council and the
9 Mayor. Our first demand is to pass a
10 resolution introducing the \$15 minimum
11 wage that cause Harrisburg to end local
12 bans on raising minimum wage.

13 Our second demand, introduce
14 legislation so that people of
15 Philadelphia can vote on \$15 minimum wage
16 in November 2015 on the Home Rule Charter
17 amendment.

18 And, three, raise the minimum
19 wage for all City employees and
20 subcontractors to at least \$15 an hour.
21 I believe I'm worth at least \$15 an hour
22 right now. We all are.

23 (Applause.)

24 MR. MURDEN: But we will not
25 get a raise unless other elected

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2 officials stand shoulder to shoulder,
3 hand to hand with us in this struggle for
4 \$15.

5 Thank you.
6 (Applause.)

7 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you
8 for your testimony, Mr. Murden.

9 Ms. Stimpson.

10 MS. STIMPSON: Hello.

11 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Please state
12 your name for the record.

13 MS. STIMPSON: My name is Aliya
14 Stimpson.

15 Hello to the City Council,
16 peers, and friends. My name is Aliya
17 Stimpson and I am a new member of the 15
18 Now Campaign. I am a student at the
19 Community College of Philadelphia and I
20 also work at our school in the Facilities
21 Management Department. The reason I am
22 here before you today is to speak as a
23 Philadelphia citizen who earns a wage
24 that is hard for one person to live on,
25 let alone providing for a family.

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2 I am a full-time student, which
3 prevents me from working all day or all
4 night. It's tough as it is to work 16
5 hours a week and go to class. One of the
6 great things about Community College is
7 that when you go to class, most of the
8 students are student workers as well, and
9 they work inside and outside of the
10 school. I have friends who work two and
11 three jobs to provide for themselves and
12 their family. It makes me having one job
13 seem small, but our responsibilities at
14 home and our stories are different. Some
15 are parents, some are returning students,
16 some are like me fresh out of high school
17 and hitting the world head-on.

18 Many of the working students
19 can be picked out of our class if you see
20 their head nodding during lecture. Most
21 likely they have just finished a night
22 shift and couldn't sleep with the
23 combination of work and studying for
24 school after work.

25 If you were me, your daily

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schedule would work something like this:

You wake up every morning at 6:00 or 7:00

to leave for school, and since you live

in Mount Airy, you don't own a car, you

have to rely on public transportation.

Traveling alone takes about 45 minutes if

everything lines up, taking a bus and

train. During that time, you try to

catch up on any reading you missed the

night before. You try to get a few hours

in early in the morning before your first

class. On Mondays and Wednesdays, you

have class from 11:30 to 8:00 p.m., with

few breaks in between, in which you work.

When you get home, you have papers to

write and homework to do, each taking

hours at a time. Before you know it,

it's 1:00 a.m. and you convince yourself

that you have to sleep, otherwise you'll

be late for work once again.

When I'm in class, I'm

exhausted and often doze off for a

second. That's the first issue. People

who work for such low wages are forced to

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2 work more in order to come close to being
3 financially stable. I live paycheck to
4 paycheck. I pay for my own
5 transportation. I pay for my cell phone
6 bills, and I live at home with my parents
7 because I can't afford anything else.

8 And forget about having fun. No.

9 There's no time for socializing or
10 working out, being able to play sports or
11 go places. If I keep working like this,
12 my youth will go right past me.

13 I'm at CCP now, but when I
14 transfer to Temple this coming fall, I'll
15 have to take out loans and pay for
16 school. So in the future, I'm not even
17 going to be able to think about buying a
18 house. I'm going to be perpetually stuck
19 in debt. Many of my peers fully
20 understand this feeling, and you can't
21 help but feel hopeless. I'm only 20
22 years old and already I'm contemplating
23 my life financially. I'm going to pay
24 for my student loans for the rest of my
25 life. And my mother, who has been out of

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2 college for 20 years, is still paying
3 every month for getting a higher
4 education, and some of us wonder was it
5 even worth it.

6 That's why this movement is so
7 important to me. With \$15 as a minimum
8 wage, we would be able to bring a large
9 percentage of Philadelphians out of
10 poverty. I as a student worker would not
11 be able to work as many hours as I do
12 today, but that would allow me to focus
13 more on my studies and have an inkling of
14 a social life. I would be able to be
15 more physically active and, best of all,
16 I would be able to get some sleep.

17 I just wait for the time when I
18 can actually stay in bed the whole extra
19 hour and not worry about being late to
20 class or late to work. Not only would
21 students be more awake, the morale in
22 class would increase. For those who
23 don't go to school, people would be happy
24 to work fewer hours and make more money.
25 This would increase the economy, because

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2 people would be willing to buy
3 merchandise, and the flow of money
4 circulating through the economy would
5 ultimately bring the cities out of debt.
6 Philadelphia would be able to raise taxes
7 because people could actually afford
8 them. The Philadelphia public system
9 would regain its funding. People also
10 would be able to buy healthier foods and
11 overall be happy. The gap between the
12 rich and the poor would decrease, and all
13 this would stem from raising the minimum
14 wage to \$15.

15 If you are someone paid more
16 than \$15, your hourly wage would also
17 increase. This impacts everyone
18 positively. We just need your help.

19 Thank you.

20 (Applause.)

21 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you
22 for your testimony.

23 Will any other witnesses from
24 this panel please approach the witness
25 table.

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2 (Witnesses approached witness
3 table.)

4 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Good
5 morning.

6 MS. TRAYNHAM: Hi. I'm Audra
7 Traynham. I'm an office cleaner in
8 University City. I'm from West
9 Philadelphia, born and raised, but my
10 story isn't like the Fresh Prince story.
11 I've seen my community change from good
12 to bad.

13 I grew up in a middle-class
14 neighborhood. My city was once thriving,
15 but that's not the case now. Back then
16 almost every family that lived in my
17 neighborhood had a union factory job that
18 paid decent wages, had enough hours, and
19 was stable and provided benefits. Not
20 anymore. Families took vacations in the
21 summer. Not anymore. When we came home
22 from school for lunch, someone's mom was
23 always home and you could always get a
24 sandwich. Not anymore. I believe one
25 reason is, those good factory jobs are

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gone and so are the wages.

I know what it takes to make under \$10 an hour as a young mother of four in the late '90s. I was making \$6.10 an hour working in the suburbs as a cleaner. I had to take the El train, the bus, and pay extra fare to travel to the suburbs. I was working less than 40 hours. I was fortunate to also have houses to clean for my landlord. That provided me with a little extra income, but not much. Every dime I made went to rent and transportation. Food stamps allowed me to provide for my children, but the cost of basic needs has went up, but not those wages. I got healthcare through the government, but even with the assistance, it just wasn't enough. If I got sick, there were no sick days, so I didn't get paid. There were no vacation days, no health benefits either. I would get on LIHEAP, the energy assistance program, but it only came once a year. It became a game of roulette, betting on

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2 which bill was going to get paid each
3 month, because I was always short.

4 I was working two low-wage
5 paying jobs and I still couldn't make
6 ends meet. That's the reality for
7 hundreds and thousands of people across
8 this city. And on top of everything
9 else, I had little to no time to spend
10 with my children. How can a person work
11 a poverty-wage job when they have two or
12 three kids and can't pay quality child
13 care? It's near impossible.

14 Now I'm a proud office cleaner
15 working in SEIU 32BJ building.

16 (Applause.)

17 MS. TRAYNHAM: I have \$15 an
18 hour and a union. I can pay my rent, my
19 bills. I have benefits, a retirement
20 plan. I'm raising my six-year-old
21 granddaughter to help her excel in
22 school. I can hire a tutor once or twice
23 a week. I even have a little left over
24 to treat myself to a movie. It's not
25 much to most, but when you know what it's

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2 like not to have small luxuries, it means
3 the world. And I'm putting money back
4 into the economy. It's the people like
5 me having a little left over for movies
6 and a dinner out every once in a while
7 that keeps the economy going. I even
8 have a future to look forward to with my
9 retirement plan.

10 (Applause.)

11 MS. TRAYNHAM: I'm fighting for
12 \$15 an hour not only for myself but for
13 my children, my grandchildren, and my
14 community. My children are grown now and
15 have jobs, but I have a daughter who
16 works a low-wage job. She makes \$9 an
17 hour. I often find myself helping her
18 and her child every so often. She can
19 positively benefit from an increase. Not
20 only would it help her, it would also
21 help our community.

22 That increase to \$15 an hour
23 has allowed me to empower my children and
24 my neighbors to fight for more. I give
25 them advice so they can pull themselves

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2 up. I tell them what things they need to
3 demand from their employers so they can
4 have a better life.

5 As we know, families are the
6 backbones of our community. People with
7 good jobs build strong communities. The
8 money I make can stay in my neighborhood
9 and help my corner store to my grocery
10 store stay in business.

11 (Applause.)

12 MS. TRAYNHAM: I am appealing
13 to City Council, pass this resolution,
14 make \$15 standard. Let's bring
15 Philadelphia back to the way it once was.

16 Thank you.

17 (Applause.)

18 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you
19 for your testimony.

20 Ms. Marshall, please state your
21 name for the record and proceed with your
22 testimony.

23 PROFESSOR MARSHALL: Hi. My
24 name is Wende Marshall and I'm a member
25 of the United Academics of

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Philadelphia/American Federation of Teachers. Although I have a Ph.D. in cultural anthropology from Princeton, have authored a book in my field, and have 17 years teaching experience as an adjunct at Temple University, I am also a low-wage worker.

The proposed minimum wage increase would not affect contingent faculty like me since we are paid on a per credit basis. However, we are engaged in our own struggle with Temple to secure decent wages and working conditions. Unfortunately, the University is standing in our way by raising objections before the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board challenging our right to vote on whether or not we want a union. In the end, though, I am very confident that we will prevail, and I believe that a union will help us to achieve better working conditions, better wages, and more respect.

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2 I'm here to support a \$15
3 minimum wage because income inequality
4 has surged to Great Depression levels,
5 and the gap between the highest and
6 lowest paid worker keeps getting bigger
7 in Philadelphia. I'm here because the
8 child poverty rate in Philadelphia is
9 nearly 40 percent, which speaks to the
10 economic crisis affecting Philadelphia
11 public school students and their parents.
12 And I'm here because poverty is the
13 number one predictor of student
14 achievement, and research shows a strong
15 correlation between the income gap and
16 the achievement gap.

17 (Applause.)

18 PROFESSOR MARSHALL: I'm here
19 to support a \$15 minimum wage because no
20 human being, no worker, no student should
21 live in poverty. The most basic ethical
22 principle of human dignity requires that
23 all workers earn a liveable wage. I'm
24 here today to support a \$15 minimum wage
25 because it is of vital importance to the

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2 health and well-being of my community and
3 because it is an important first step.

4 But I'm here today especially
5 because I am concerned about my students
6 at Temple University and about college
7 students in Philadelphia. Although
8 getting a college degree used to be a
9 ticket to middle-class economic security,
10 that is no longer the case. According to
11 the Economic Policy Institute, the
12 greatest real wage loss between 2013 and
13 2014 was among those with a college or
14 advanced degree. College students must
15 contend with rising tuition, the economic
16 fragility of their parents, and student
17 loan debt, which, according to the New
18 York Federal Reserve, is at \$1.2
19 trillion. On top of that, college
20 students graduate into a job market in
21 which nearly 40 percent of all new jobs
22 are in low-wage sectors.

23 Insufficient wages don't only
24 affect college grads, but also impact the
25 lives of students who are still enrolled

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in college and must contribute their earnings to tuition, the cost of books and supplies, rent, and food. Instead of concentrating on their studies, students are forced to work long hours for low wages. Last semester I taught a course required of all Temple University undergraduates. Almost all of the 27 students in my section worked, and more than half worked more than full time. One of my students, Ember Blackwell, worked 38 hours a week making 7.25 at Walmart. Ember hoped to go on to pharmacy school at Temple, but the demands of her work life meant that it was very difficult for her to focus on her schoolwork and achieve the required 3.0 to get accepted. In the same course, I had students who worked at Starbucks, Wawa, Home Depot, and several restaurants around town. Struggling to find the resources to keep themselves enrolled in school, they had much less time to focus on reading, writing, and learning.

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2 This struggle is reflected in
3 national data collected by Feeding
4 America, which found that 10 percent of
5 their 46.5 million clients are currently
6 students and that nearly one-third of
7 those surveyed had to choose between
8 paying for food and covering educational
9 expenses in the past year.

10 My students at Temple are part
11 of the future of this city, and so I am
12 here to support a \$15 minimum wage
13 because such an increase will help them
14 work less and study more.

15 (Applause.)

16 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you
17 for your testimony and thank all the
18 members of the panel for their testimony.

19 Are there questions for any
20 members of the panel?

21 (No response.)

22 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Seeing none,
23 thank you very much.

24 Our next panel will deal with
25 impact on business, and we'll take

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2 testimony from Katherine Murphy on behalf
3 of Cristian Mora and Brian Oliveira.

4 Is Katherine Murphy here?

5 MS. MURPHY: Yes.

6 (Applause.)

7 COUNCILMAN GOODE: We have her
8 testimony.

9 We have your testimony.

10 MS. MURPHY: I don't have a
11 copy of it.

12 COUNCILMAN GOODE: We have your
13 testimony.

14 MS. MURPHY: Oh, you do? Thank
15 you.

16 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Please state
17 your name for the record and proceed with
18 your testimony.

19 MS. MURPHY: I'm Katherine
20 Murphy. I'm here representing Girard
21 Brasserie on Girard Ave on behalf of
22 Cristian Mora and Brian Oliveira. I'm
23 working as a chef there.

24 When we opened Girard last
25 year, we made the decision to pay our

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2 employees a living wage and benefits that
3 exceed the restaurant industry standard.
4 Having worked as servers ourselves, we
5 wanted to forego the unpredictable
6 practice of forcing our employees to live
7 on tips. At Girard, we pay our servers
8 well above the tipped minimum wage of
9 2.83 an hour. We pay them an average of
10 \$13 an hour.

11 Every employee --

12 (Applause.)

13 MS. MURPHY: Every employee has
14 health insurance, of which we pay 100
15 percent.

16 (Applause.)

17 MS. MURPHY: Workers only pay
18 their co-pays. We also offer set
19 schedules, unless there is a big event
20 going on at the restaurant. Our workers
21 have paid sick days based on an honor
22 system. There is no upper limit on the
23 number of days they can take, because we
24 trust them to use them fairly. We also
25 offer four days of paid vacation for

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2 every six months on the job.

3 We use an ethical business
4 model at Girard because we know how to
5 build a business that is truly special
6 and offered great hospitality and great
7 food. We had to do it right with happy
8 employees.

9 Brian comes from a family of
10 restaurant owners and has worked in one
11 since he was 14. Cristian has worked in
12 the industry for 15 years. We knew the
13 industry has high turnover and workers
14 often live in precarious situations.

15 The only way that we know how
16 to attract and retain good employees is
17 to make sure they are financially secure.
18 In our minds, we knew we needed to meet
19 our employees' basic needs for health and
20 shelter so they come to work without
21 financial anxiety about paying their rent
22 or their bills.

23 In return, we're going to get a
24 better employee. Not only from the
25 people who are applying, but with every

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2 worker that has been there since day one.
3 All of our workers know every change in
4 every recipe, the history of the company,
5 the ins, the outs of the business. On
6 the floor they are going to be able to
7 represent our food well, answer questions
8 about the menu, be genuinely friendly and
9 knowledgeable about the menu. We have a
10 staff of professional employees who want
11 to be part of our business for the long
12 run.

13 We pay higher wages at Girard
14 not because the government forces us to,
15 because it's the smart and right thing to
16 do.

17 (Applause.)

18 MS. MURPHY: It takes long
19 hours and a lot of work, but many small
20 businesses do the same. Studies have
21 shown that small businesses like us are
22 already paying above minimum wages. We
23 know our workers and we care about them.
24 What's unfortunate and criminal, however,
25 is that many large companies are not

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2 working as hard as we are to ensure their
3 employees make a decent wage. It seems
4 the bigger the company, the worse it
5 treats its employees. It is necessary
6 for the government to step up and make
7 these companies play their own part in
8 building an economy that works for
9 business owners and workers.

10 Right now our economy and the
11 laws that govern it favor big business at
12 every turn. Big corporations like
13 Walmart, Olive Garden, Target control
14 supply chains and get goods for much
15 cheaper than small businesses like ours.
16 Companies like Comcast get huge tax
17 incentives to move white-collar workers
18 from one city to another. At CVS and
19 Dollar General, the CEOs make over 1,000
20 times the average employee. Trust me,
21 none of us are making \$13,000 an hour.

22 As owners, we take moderate
23 salaries in order to help cover our costs
24 while our business gets off the ground.
25 Compare this to the CEO of McDonald's who

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2 makes \$9,237 an hour.

3 As small business owners, we
4 are tired of the Chamber of Commerce
5 speaking on our behalf. The Chamber --
6 (Applause.)

7 MS. MURPHY: The Chamber trots
8 out small business owners like us when
9 they want to fight wage increases that
10 primarily impact their own low-wage jobs.
11 When they are advocating for giant tax
12 breaks, none of those apply to small
13 businesses. Take, for instance, the
14 example of Walmart. Taxpayers like our
15 small businesses and our workers are
16 subsidizing Walmart's exploitative wages.
17 Walmart pays its employees so little that
18 they are on food stamps and Medicaid
19 while working full time. We pay for that
20 when we pay our taxes. Our workers pay
21 for that too.

22 Even more outrageous, Walmart
23 employees and other poor working families
24 are shopping at Walmart, spending their
25 government funds back at Walmart. This

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2 is an insane system that makes it harder
3 for small businesses to succeed.

4 We think the entire business
5 community has something to learn from
6 small business owners like us. We can
7 create an economy that works for
8 everyone, one with good jobs that sustain
9 families.

10 I support a higher minimum
11 wage. I especially support higher wages
12 at companies who can afford an immediate
13 bold increase. Walmart, Target,
14 McDonald's, Comcast, huge hospitals and
15 universities can afford to pay \$15 an
16 hour now.

17 (Applause.)

18 MS. MURPHY: Our elected
19 officials need to pass a bold wage floor
20 that holds big business to the same
21 standard that restaurant owners like me
22 are already doing our absolute best to
23 live up to.

24 Thank you.

25 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you.

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2 (Applause.)

3 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you
4 for your testimony and thank you for the
5 standard that that business is setting.

6 Are there questions for this
7 witness?

8 (No response.)

9 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Seeing none,
10 thank you very much.

11 Our next panel are our friends
12 from labor - Gabe Morgan, Jerry Jordan,
13 Jed Dodd, Sue Clemmons.

14 (Witnesses approached witness
15 table.)

16 (Audience members chanting.)

17 COUNCILMAN GOODE: It is now 12
18 o'clock, so good afternoon. Please state
19 your name for the record and proceed with
20 your testimony. Welcome.

21 MS. CRUZ: Sure. My name is
22 Daisy Cruz. I'm filling in for Gabe
23 Morgan from SEIU 32BJ.

24 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Ms. Cruz,
25 could you pull the microphone closer to

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2 you.

3 MS. CRUZ: Sure. My name is
4 Daisy Cruz and I'm the Mid-Atlantic
5 District Leader for 32BJ SEIU. We
6 represent over 145,000 commercial
7 cleaners, property service, and food
8 service workers in Philadelphia and
9 across 11 states, including Washington,
10 DC. The majority of our members come
11 from the service industry, an industry
12 that is growing and profiting at high
13 speed while offering poverty wages and
14 few, if any, benefits.

15 When we're able to secure a
16 union contract for these workers,
17 low-wage jobs are transformed into
18 family-sustaining ones. But we can't do
19 it alone. Corporations wiped out
20 millions of good middle-class jobs during
21 the recession. Now they want these new
22 jobs to pay as little as possible. When
23 large profitable corporations hold down
24 wages and benefits, that hurts all of us.
25 The impact couldn't be any clearer here

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in Philadelphia, where far, far too many of us are barely surviving, let alone thriving. Even people working full time or even working two or three jobs, how our brothers and sisters testified earlier today, can't make ends meet while earning just 7.25 an hour. That's why we're also proud to support the Fight for 15, a growing movement to raise wages and build the economy for all of us.

Just over two years ago, hundreds of people who work in the fast food restaurants in New York City went on strike. They called for \$15 an hour and the right to form a union. Since that first walkout, thousands of fast food cooks and cashiers in nearly 200 cities, including Philadelphia, have joined the Fight for 15 movement, and workers from many other industries have joined the movement.

The inspired worker leaders of this movement who risked their livelihoods for a chance at a fair shot

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2 have pledged that they are willing to do
3 whatever it takes to win \$15 and a union.
4 Philadelphia needs to make the same
5 commitment from our elected leaders here
6 at City Council and anyone who hopes to
7 be part of this body.

8 If we want to bring our city
9 back on the road to prosperity, we need
10 to hold our leaders in City Hall who are
11 also willing to do whatever it takes to
12 lift people out of poverty. Please stand
13 up to the rich corporations and
14 Harrisburg and set the standards for what
15 Philadelphia workers and their families
16 deserve. We're worth more than \$15.

17 Thank you.

18 (Applause.)

19 MR. JORDAN: Good afternoon.

20 I'm Jerry Jordan, President of the
21 Philadelphia Federation of Teachers. I
22 want to thank City Council for convening
23 today's hearing on this very important
24 issue. I also want to take some time to
25 recognize and thank a previous speaker,

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2 Wende Marshall, a fellow member of the
3 American Federation of Teachers and a
4 Philadelphia educator doing all she can
5 to ensure a brighter future for our city
6 students.

7 The PFT stands in full support
8 of a \$15 per hour minimum wage.

9 (Applause.)

10 MR. JORDAN: As educators, we
11 have a great responsibility of preparing
12 school children for the future, whether
13 that means college or joining the
14 workforce. The fight for 15 is not only
15 for future generations, but it's for
16 today's working parents of Philadelphia's
17 school children.

18 It is a proven fact that
19 children from more economically stable
20 homes do better in school. Raising the
21 standard of living for Philadelphia's
22 parents means raising achievement levels
23 for our students.

24 (Applause.)

25 MR. JORDAN: Everyone in this

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room will acknowledge the huge role that a quality education plays in ensuring that today's children are tomorrow's contributing members of society. It is critical that we do all we can to prepare our students for a 21st century global economy. That's why the PFT has been leading the charge to bring an increase in funding levels for public education as well as a funding formula to ensure that resources go to the schools and children that need them the most.

While education may be the most critical issue facing our city, fixing our schools is not our only challenge. What good is preparing our children for a 21st century economy if they can only earn 20th century wages?

Philadelphia in many ways is becoming a world-class city. Our streets are becoming safer. We're becoming a greener city, and younger residents are moving here, bringing a new energy to many of our neighborhoods. But this

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2 growth naturally drives up the cost of
3 living in this great city. If we are
4 serious about a better future for our
5 children, we can't simply stop at
6 improving education. We need to improve
7 economic opportunities across the board.
8 That includes housing, new and different
9 job opportunities, and better wages for
10 all citizens.

11 A \$15 minimum wage is not the
12 only solution, but it is a great first
13 step to ensuring that our school children
14 will remain in the City as adults and be
15 able to take part in the promise of a
16 better Philadelphia.

17 Thank you again for allowing me
18 this opportunity to testify this
19 afternoon.

20 (Applause.)

21 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you
22 for your testimony.

23 Please state your name for the
24 record and proceed.

25 MS. CLEMMONS: My name is Sue

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2 Clemmons. I am the Vice President of
3 Health Professionals and Allied Employees
4 Local 5106 at Temple Episcopal Hospital.

5 In 1972 when I started working
6 at Episcopal Hospital, Front and Lehigh
7 was a different neighborhood. The people
8 who came to our hospitals were from
9 working-class families. Mothers were
10 frequently stay-at-home moms and dads had
11 decent jobs that enabled them to take
12 care of their families. There were local
13 factories and industries that supported
14 the community by providing benefits,
15 retirement packages, and living wages.
16 The community wasn't in crisis, and the
17 illnesses and injuries that we treated at
18 Episcopal back then were different from
19 today.

20 Fast forward to 2015. I have
21 been a nurse at the hospital for 42
22 years. The area surrounding Episcopal is
23 now one of the poorest in the City.
24 Philadelphia is already one of the
25 poorest big cities in the United States

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2 and it has the highest rate of people
3 living in deep poverty, with incomes
4 below half of the poverty line.
5 Philadelphia's deep poverty level is 12.2
6 percent, almost twice the U.S. deep
7 poverty rate of 6.3 percent.

8 Factories in the neighborhood
9 have long since been shuttered and the
10 big business now is the drug trade.
11 Poverty, homelessness, and substance
12 abuse, we see it every day in our
13 emergency room and our behavioral units
14 and our medical unit. There is a
15 day-to-day struggle for many of our
16 clients just to survive and little hope
17 that things will improve.

18 The types of ailments we see
19 are the results of delayed medical care,
20 drug overdoses, suicide attempts, and the
21 psychological stresses of poverty. We
22 see adults and children who have serious
23 health problems from a lifetime of eating
24 cheap processed food. We see young
25 children with severe asthma living in

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conditions that only worsen their
disease. As other people have said this
morning, the children growing up in this
environment already have two strikes
against them before they enter school.

Deep poverty has severe
consequences for children. Studies have
shown that many develop cognitive and
emotional delays. Children in deep
poverty are more frequently hospitalized,
do less well in school, and are less
likely to be employed later in life.

But poverty is just not an
economic issue. It's an issue of mental
and physical health, and we must act as a
city and community to take concrete steps
to eliminate it. Fortunately, some
people from our neighborhood were lucky
enough to get a job in our security
department, and they used that as a
stepping stone to a good union job with
decent wages and benefits. When workers
form or join a union, they collectively
bargain for higher wages and benefits.

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2 These North Philly residents are
3 succeeding because they were afforded the
4 dignity of working for a living wage, a
5 wage that is sufficient to provide food,
6 shelter, and the necessities of life.

7 As an entire city, we are
8 calling on our elected representatives in
9 City Council to stand beside us and help
10 us bargain collectively for all working
11 people. We all deserve a minimum \$15 an
12 hour, but companies, especially huge
13 companies, will never pay that unless we
14 stand together and force them to treat
15 all workers with dignity.

16 (Applause.)

17 MS. CLEMMONS: The high wages
18 we associate with the industrial periods
19 in our city were not just a result of a
20 magical industry that is now gone. Those
21 workers earned higher wages because they
22 organized, just as we did at Temple
23 Episcopal and our union and just as we
24 are doing here in these Council Chambers.

25 In Philadelphia, the City of

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2 Brotherly Love, we need to find a way to
3 provide all of the workforce with the
4 ability to sustain themselves and their
5 families. We can push back the tide of
6 poverty and create good jobs. Raising
7 the minimum wage to \$15 is a good way to
8 ensure that every job in Philadelphia is
9 a good job, be it in a restaurant, a
10 hospital, sweeping the floor or taking
11 care of our elderly citizens. City
12 Council, please join us as we demand \$15
13 an hour for all Philadelphia workers.

14 Thank you.

15 (Applause.)

16 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you
17 for your testimony.

18 Our next witness from this
19 panel is Jed Dodd.

20 (Applause.)

21 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Good
22 afternoon. Please state your name for
23 the record and proceed with your
24 testimony.

25 MR. DODD: My name is Jed Dodd.

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I'd like to thank the Council for this opportunity to speak on this very important issue. I am the General Chairman of the Pennsylvania Federation Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Our members perform the tough, hard, dangerous, skilled, and back-breaking work of constructing and maintaining the railroad tracks, buildings and bridges and overhead catenary system for Amtrak, Conrail, CSX, and Norfolk Southern.

Like you, I was elected to defend the interests of the working-class men and women who I represent. Members of our union live in neighborhoods that would be safer, cleaner, and more secure with a \$15 an hour minimum wage. Homeowners would have the means to maintain their property. Our city would have the tax base to fund public infrastructure, education, and safety, and neighborhood businesses would benefit

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2 from Philadelphia citizens having more
3 money to spend.

4 I am also deeply concerned
5 about the future of our country as the
6 corporations increase the stranglehold on
7 our republic. It is our duty --

8 (Applause.)

9 MR. DODD: It is our duty as
10 elected officials to defend our republic
11 against this corporate elite. We need to
12 ask ourselves why Harrisburg is standing
13 in the way of our right to
14 self-determination.

15 The insatiable greed of the
16 corporations and their lobbyists using
17 their wholly owned government servants
18 have put into place a statewide
19 preemption that takes away our rights to
20 govern ourselves. We would urge you to
21 stand with the citizens of Philadelphia.
22 We call for this preemption to be struck
23 down so we can determine for ourselves
24 what is best for the citizens of
25 Philadelphia rather than having

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2 Harrisburg impose upon us a governance
3 that is best for their corporate owners
4 and the moneyed elite.

5 The issue goes right to the
6 heart of the quality of life for
7 working-class Pennsylvanians. The 1
8 percent has amassed great wealth at the
9 expense of the 99 percent, and today we
10 see income inequality at a level not seen
11 since the Great Depression.

12 (Applause.)

13 MR. DODD: Philadelphia, as
14 other speakers have mentioned, is ranked
15 as the poorest big city in America. We
16 also have the distinction of having one
17 of the highest rates of deep poverty,
18 people with incomes below half the
19 poverty line. Philadelphia's deep
20 poverty rate is 12.2 percent, which is
21 nearly 185,000 people, including 60,000
22 children. In a fair and just society,
23 this would be a crime and those
24 responsible would be in prison. Thank
25 you, Harrisburg.

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2 (Applause.)

3 MR. DODD: We call upon our
4 City Council to speak out against this
5 outrage and support the \$15 an hour
6 movement with your voice and your vote.

7 Of course, what we have here in
8 Philadelphia is not new, nor is it
9 isolated to Philadelphia. Our current
10 crisis has its roots in the elections of
11 Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher in
12 the early 1980s, which began the
13 bootstrapping scorched earth policies of
14 neo-liberalism.

15 (Applause.)

16 MR. DODD: As a result of these
17 politics, we have seen the greatest
18 transfer of wealth from those who create
19 value for a living to those who create
20 nothing in all of reported history. Our
21 republic has been transformed into a
22 corporate state. Many politicians, like
23 puppets on a string, ignore their
24 obligations to the citizens and do the
25 bidding of the billionaire class. This

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2 one-sided class war has resulted in the
3 systematic reduction in wages, benefits,
4 pensions, and working conditions in every
5 industry. Our civil and political rights
6 have been crippled by the same process in
7 order to frustrate any effective defense
8 against this theft. The politics of
9 neo-liberalism have enabled the 1 percent
10 to literally suck the blood and vitality
11 from working people in general and
12 specifically in Pennsylvania.

13 (Applause.)

14 MR. DODD: We have had enough
15 of this race to the bottom. A founding
16 principle of our movement is an injury to
17 one is an injury to all. There is --

18 (Applause.)

19 MR. DODD: There is a new
20 movement within the working class that is
21 organizing low-wage workers for union
22 rights on the job, decent pay and working
23 conditions, and a minimum wage of \$15 an
24 hour. This has resulted in city councils
25 standing with their citizens in Seattle

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2 and San Francisco and enacting a minimum
3 wage of \$15 an hour, escalating strikes
4 and other actions by low-wage workers,
5 forcing the Walmarts and other modern-day
6 plantation owners to raise wages slightly
7 and, most importantly --

8 (Applause.)

9 MR. DODD: And, most
10 importantly, breathing hope into large
11 numbers of our citizens who are forced to
12 work two and three jobs and still live in
13 poverty.

14 The City of Philadelphia was
15 built with the blood and sweat of its
16 working class. Our labor created this
17 wealth. Today, Philadelphia is littered
18 with empty industrial buildings, many of
19 whom have been transformed through
20 gentrification, which has pushed rents
21 and affordable housing further out of
22 reach for those who work for a living.

23 (Applause.)

24 MR. DODD: While good
25 manufacturing jobs may not be coming

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2 back, we have to recognize that these
3 good manufacturing jobs were not always
4 good. It took mass struggle from the
5 people through our unions and progressive
6 politicians using effective public policy
7 to force our corporate masters of the day
8 to share with us a little more of the
9 wealth we produce. Today's low-wage
10 service workers are low-paid industrial
11 workers of yesterday. We need to join in
12 social solidarity and transform these
13 jobs just as the generation before us
14 did.

15 We have a choice. We can stand
16 with citizens of Philadelphia and fight
17 to improve the standard of living for all
18 of us or we can stand with our corporate
19 masters and their apologists in
20 Harrisburg.

21 (Applause.)

22 MR. DODD: We call upon you to
23 demand our right to self-determination,
24 strike down the preemption, and raise the
25 minimum wage to \$15 an hour.

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2 Thank you.

3 (Standing ovation.)

4 (Audience members chanting.)

5 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you
6 again to our friends from labor. Our
7 last panel will be faith and community.
8 Our first witness is Reverend Gregory
9 Holston and we'll also ask Marty Harrison
10 to come to the table, along with Stan
11 Shapiro.

12 (Applause.)

13 (Witnesses approached witness
14 table.)

15 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Good
16 morning, Reverend Holston. Good
17 afternoon.

18 REVEREND HOLSTON: Good
19 afternoon. We thank you for having this
20 hearing today, and we appreciate your
21 commitment to this issue. My name is
22 Reverend Gregory Holston. I am the
23 Senior Pastor of New Vision United
24 Methodist Church, which is located at
25 Broad and Westmoreland Streets in our

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2 great North Philadelphia area.

3 I am one of the organizers of
4 the MLK DARE Coalition, which --

5 (Applause.)

6 REVEREND HOLSTON: -- which
7 recently led a march where 7,000 to
8 10,000 people came to speak out on
9 various issues, particularly asking for
10 \$15 minimum wage and a right to unionize.

11 (Applause.)

12 REVEREND HOLSTON: I'm also
13 Co-Chair of POWER's Economic Dignity
14 Team. POWER is 40 houses of faith and
15 growing across the City of Philadelphia
16 representing 35,000 individuals.

17 I stand in support of \$15
18 minimum wage for the citizens of
19 Philadelphia. And departing just a
20 little bit from my notes. So much has
21 already been said, but what came to mind
22 to me is -- I heard so much being
23 spoken -- is that even though
24 Philadelphia is growing in its Center
25 City area and many are looking at it as

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2 the next great city, the reality is that
3 most of Philadelphia is in a state of
4 emergency. The reality where I am pastor
5 at is where there is a 40 percent poverty
6 rate and a deep poverty rate of 25
7 percent. We are in a state of emergency.

8 You know, a state of emergency
9 is an interesting phrase, because
10 tomorrow we'll probably have 8 inches of
11 snow on the ground and the Mayor will
12 come out and say we will have a state of
13 emergency because of the snow. The
14 short-term issues arise and special rules
15 are applied when we have a state of
16 emergency. There are things we do
17 differently because we have a state of
18 emergency. There are ways of handling
19 the problems that we face that are
20 different when we simply declare it's a
21 state of emergency. And the reality of
22 the poverty that we see each day in our
23 city is that we've grown accustomed to
24 something that really is a state of
25 emergency and, therefore, we need to do

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2 something differently about the state of
3 emergency we're in. If we're going to
4 really address --

5 (Applause.)

6 REVEREND HOLSTON: -- the
7 poverty refacing, that means all of us.
8 All of us leaders in government and City
9 Council leaders and Mayor and anybody who
10 wants to be there has to address the
11 issue of how do we deal with poverty of
12 this state that makes us the largest big
13 city of the most poor people, 400,000
14 people each day being in poverty. Forty
15 percent of our babies, our children
16 growing hungry every night. That's a
17 state of emergency.

18 We have to come up with
19 creative ways of addressing the state of
20 emergency. We got to come up with
21 different ways of doing things. And some
22 creative legal arguments have been shared
23 with many of you on this Council of how
24 to address this state of emergency, and
25 maybe in normal terms, you might not want

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2 to use those arguments, but here when
3 you're in a state of emergency, you're
4 going to pull and grab a hold of anything
5 you can to end the state of emergency
6 here.

7 So hold on to a \$15 minimum
8 wage and we fight against a preemption
9 clause and we do whatever we can through
10 the courts, we do whatever we can through
11 the politics, we do whatever we can by
12 marching and the legislative process. We
13 do whatever we can to change the state of
14 emergency so that we can have a city
15 that's going to really be a city of
16 opportunity that works for all.

17 That's what I just wanted to
18 say. Take all of this information and
19 put it in the proper context, and if we
20 do, then I'm sure that this Council and
21 these leaders will come up with creative
22 ways to address the issue, starting with
23 passing legislation for a \$15 an hour
24 minimum wage.

25 Thank you so much.

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2 (Applause.)

3 MS. HARRISON: I'm Marty

4 Harrison. I'm a nurse at Temple

5 University Hospital and I serve on the

6 Executive Board of my local, the Temple

7 University Hospital Nurses Association,

8 also a member of 15 Now and Socialist

9 Alternative. Thank you, Councilmembers,

10 for the opportunity to talk to you today.

11 So many of the previous

12 speakers have talked about the poverty

13 statistics in Philadelphia. They've

14 figured very prominently in all the

15 testimonies. And you've heard about

16 those statistics from many different

17 angles and many different perspectives,

18 but especially as Reverend Holston just

19 pointed out, those numbers are damning.

20 Philadelphia is poor and poorer than it

21 has to be.

22 Though the statistics are

23 essential to a clear understanding of the

24 problem, they can seem far away and

25 academic. The low-wage workers spoke

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eloquently, passionately, movingly from their rich experience across different sectors of the economy about the impact of those dry numbers on real lives of real people. They talked about the sacrifices that they've made and the risks that they've taken to change the situation. They've testified to what the positive effects of 15 would be in their lives.

The elected union leaders brought us back to the big picture and talked not only about the personal situations of the members that they represent, but about how poverty affects the work that they do in education, in healthcare, in vital infrastructure. They remind us that no successful movement, not the movement for the eight-hour day, not the movement to build the industrial unions, not the Civil Rights Movement, none of them succeeded by asking politely, by asking permission --

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2 (Applause.)

3 MS. HARRISON: -- or making
4 logical arguments. These were powerful
5 movements that challenged the status quo
6 and pushed the legal limits of their day.

7 Let me assure you that the sky
8 has not fallen in Seattle or San
9 Francisco, any of the cities that have
10 increased their minimum wage to \$15 an
11 hour or other numbers. Small businesses
12 thrive there.

13 Philadelphia's problems have
14 deep roots, which clearly reach far
15 beyond the City's limits, but Council has
16 power to make significant and important
17 changes. Council can act now.

18 So support the low-wage
19 workers. Pass a resolution which boldly
20 and unequivocally supports \$15 an hour as
21 the minimum wage and the right to form a
22 union.

23 (Applause.)

24 MS. HARRISON: Introduce a
25 Charter change amendment on 15 for the

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2 November ballot and let Philadelphia
3 vote. Use the overwhelming support such
4 a measure would garner to push Harrisburg
5 further, to challenge the preemption.
6 Assert your rights and your
7 responsibilities to represent the
8 interests of working-class and poor
9 Philadelphians. And, lastly, most
10 immediately, raise the minimum wage of
11 all City workers, contractors, and
12 subcontractors to \$15 an hour.

13 Thank you.

14 (Applause.)

15 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you
16 for your testimony.

17 Are there any questions for
18 this panel?

19 (No response.)

20 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Seeing none,
21 thank you very much.

22 MS. HARRISON: Thank you.

23 REVEREND HOLSTON: Thank you.

24 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Stan
25 Shapiro, Margarita Padin.

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2 (Applause.)

3 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Stan

4 Shapiro, Margarita Padin.

5 (Witnesses approached witness

6 table.)

7 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Please state
8 your name for the record and proceed with
9 your testimony.

10 MS. PADIN: Hi. My name is
11 Margarita Padin and I'm here with members
12 of the Carpenters Union today.

13 (Applause.)

14 MS. PADIN: Can I start?

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes.

16 MS. PADIN: The Carpenters
17 Union supports all workers that are
18 working for poverty wages, and we support
19 the effort to raise the minimum wage now
20 to \$15 an hour. We also support the
21 right of every worker to form a union.

22 Thank you.

23 (Applause.)

24 MR. SHAPIRO: So Chairperson,
25 members of the Committee, thanks so much

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2 for holding this hearing. I'm Stan
3 Shapiro. I'm here today as Vice Chair of
4 Neighborhood Networks, and I'd like to
5 give you all a little gift from our
6 members and friends. This is almost 800
7 signatures of folks in Northwest
8 Philadelphia saying raise the minimum
9 wage to 15 an hour.

10 (Applause.)

11 MR. SHAPIRO: We fully support
12 15 an hour and so does most of
13 Philadelphia.

14 Our members spent a little time
15 circulating those petitions, and it is
16 one of the easiest petitions we've ever
17 worked on. No doubt. Very easiest. So
18 my testimony is on behalf not just of
19 Neighborhood Networks but of those 800
20 folks as well.

21 It's a matter of simple justice
22 that when someone works hard and provides
23 a service to an employer and the public,
24 they ought to earn a living wage. They
25 need to be able to go home at night to a

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2 place that provides a roof over their
3 heads and food in their bellies. If they
4 have a family, those folks deserve the
5 same. This is simply not possible at a
6 wage of less than \$15 an hour in
7 Philadelphia.

8 A variety of arguments have
9 been made against raising the wage, and
10 others have debunked them, so I'm not
11 going to be redundant. But I do want to
12 address one matter, the question of
13 whether this initiative is something this
14 Council has the power to enact.

15 As some of you know, before
16 there was a nice bright shirt like the
17 one I'm wearing, I was a lawyer serving
18 this body. And there were many times
19 that City Solicitors would come before
20 you, as they have on this occasion, and
21 tell you that this idea is beyond your
22 powers or that one is beyond your powers
23 or the Constitution of the United States
24 or the Constitution of Pennsylvania
25 prohibits this or prohibits that. Many

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times, many times this Council simply ignored that opinion. Not because necessarily it assumed the opinions were wrong, but because they knew what they were doing was right. And so Council passed anti-apartheid legislation, it passed right-to-know legislation, it passed legislation offering equity to condo owners, and those were upheld. And it passed anti-assault legislation, but that was struck down. But struck down or upheld, Council believed these initiatives were the right thing to do and it did them. This case is no different. It is the right thing to do to pass \$15 an hour, and this Council should be sure that it does it.

(Applause.)

MR. SHAPIRO: So after writing these words, I was actually thinking about other occasions in which Council told a City Solicitor, Thank you very much, and went on and did what it wanted to do, and one of them was fully recent

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2 in the memory, I'm sure -- will result in
3 the memory of everyone in this room, and
4 that had to do with the closing of City
5 facilities. In 1982, I think it was
6 about 1982, somewhere around there,
7 Council was confronted with the
8 possibility of some fire stations
9 closing, and it decided that it ought to
10 require that before any public property
11 is closed, this Council should pass an
12 ordinance allowing that property to
13 close. And the City Solicitor said,
14 Ridiculous, you can't do that. That's
15 within the discretion of the executive
16 branch. And Council said, Thank you very
17 much, and it passed the ordinance.

18 About 20 years later, 25 years
19 later, there is a Mayor of the City that
20 wanted to close libraries, and there were
21 folks who, like the folks in this room,
22 said, We're not taking that, we're
23 standing up for what we think is right
24 and we want Council to stand up for what
25 we think is right. And so some members

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2 of Council went to court and sued, saying
3 that those libraries could not be closed
4 by Mayor Nutter on his own volition.
5 There's an ordinance of City Council --
6 even though the City Solicitor said it
7 was illegal, there is an ordinance of
8 City Council that said that it had a say
9 in whether or not those libraries will be
10 closed. There was actually somebody
11 sitting to my right who represented
12 citizens in that lawsuit to keep those
13 libraries open, and that's Sherrie Cohen.

14 (Applause.)

15 MR. SHAPIRO: And those
16 libraries are now open because a judge
17 said that City Solicitor was wrong, that
18 Council did have the right to pass that
19 ordinance and the Mayor could not close
20 those libraries, and those libraries are
21 still open right now.

22 So please pay no attention to
23 the City Solicitor's opinion.

24 (Applause.)

25 MR. SHAPIRO: That's it. I'm

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2 done. I'll be happy to answer any
3 questions.

4 COUNCILMAN GOODE: The last two
5 witnesses I have are Sherrie Cohen and
6 Isaiah Thomas.

7 MS. COHEN: Hello, Chairman and
8 members of the Committee. My name is
9 Sherrie Cohen and I'm here as a candidate
10 for City Council at-large, and one of the
11 issues I'm campaigning on is for a \$15
12 minimum wage.

13 (Applause.)

14 MS. COHEN: It is time to end
15 state control over Philadelphia, state
16 control of our school system, state
17 control of our gun laws, and state
18 control over the right of Philadelphians
19 to raise the minimum wage to a liveable
20 wage of \$15 an hour.

21 Poor people have been under
22 attack by the Corbett Administration for
23 four years as Corbett slashed and burned
24 the state safety net, terminating adult
25 basic health insurance for working poor

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Philadelphians; eliminating HEMAP, the Home Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program, which had rescued thousands of homeowners from foreclosure; ending the tiny general assistance grants for thousands of sick or disabled people, domestic survivors fleeing abuse, and people in recovery; kicking thousands of children from Medicaid, claiming their paperwork was not up to date; and instituting a new asset test for food stamps, threatening the food security of hundreds of thousands of Philadelphians. Now it is time for Philadelphia to fight back.

We all know that Philadelphia has the highest rate of poverty and deep poverty of the largest ten cities in our nation. Twenty-eight percent of Philadelphians, between 430,000 and 440,000 people, live below the federal poverty level, including 39 percent of our children, or 135,000 children, and 42 percent of households headed by women, or

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2 193,000 households. Fifteen hundred
3 families become homeless every year,
4 including over 3,000 children. The
5 poverty rate for black and Latino
6 Philadelphians is more than double that
7 of white Philadelphians.

8 Each year 40,000 Philadelphians
9 return from jail or prison with criminal
10 records that are barriers to employment,
11 housing, access to benefits and
12 education. The best tool we have to
13 reduce poverty is to increase the minimum
14 wage. The current minimum wage of 7.25
15 is not a living wage. It is a
16 poverty-level wage. As we say at our
17 rallies, we cannot survive on 7.25.

18 I demand that \$15 an hour is
19 not even enough to meet one's basic needs
20 in Philadelphia. According to the
21 Pennsylvania Self-Sufficiency Standard, a
22 more accurate measure of poverty than the
23 federal level, because it takes into
24 account the cost of housing, child care,
25 food, transportation, healthcare, and

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taxes, a family of four needs \$61,199 a year to make basic needs in Philadelphia without public assistance such as welfare or food stamps. The hourly wage needed to raise this salary is approximately double our demand of \$15 an hour.

About 42 percent of Philadelphia households live below this self-sufficiency standard today, and that is an increase of 10 percentage points from just two years ago.

Raising the minimum wage to 15 an hour is not only the most effective way to lift thousands of workers and their families out of poverty, but it is also an essential approach to spurring job creation and improving student performance.

First, it is well known that when low-wage workers earn more money, they spend these extra earnings in their communities. A report found that for every 25 low-wage workers receiving a raise to \$15 per hour, one full-time job

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2 will be created.

3 Second, the evidence is

4 overwhelming that poverty and hunger

5 undermine the cognitive, social, and

6 emotional development of children.

7 Children living in poverty often enter

8 kindergarten with poorer language skills,

9 can't concentrate as well, don't perform

10 as well on math and language arts tests,

11 and have a harder time getting along with

12 their peers and teachers than kids from

13 middle and upper-income homes.

14 At the height of the Great

15 Recession, nearly half of all families

16 with children in our city reported food

17 hardship or increased hunger. Lifting

18 families out of poverty through increased

19 wages would have a significant positive

20 impact on the academic achievement of

21 low-income children.

22 As the Universal Declaration of

23 Human Rights proclaims, everyone has the

24 right to a standard of living adequate

25 for the health and well-being and that of

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2 their family, including food, clothing,
3 housing, and medical care.

4 I urge Council to immediately
5 pass legislation to increase the minimum
6 wage for Philadelphians to \$15 an hour
7 now.

8 Thank you.

9 (Applause.)

10 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you
11 for your testimony.

12 Is there anyone else here to
13 testify on this resolution?

14 (No response.)

15 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Seeing none,
16 does Councilman Johnson have any closing
17 remarks?

18 MR. BURTON: Excuse me, sir.

19 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Please
20 approach the witness table.

21 (Witness approached witness
22 table.)

23 MR. BURTON: How you doing this
24 morning?

25 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Good

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2 afternoon. State your name for the
3 record and please proceed with your
4 testimony.

5 MR. BURTON: Rassan Burton.

6 COURT STENOGRAPHER: I'm sorry.
7 I didn't hear you.

8 MR. BURTON: Rassan Burton.

9 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Pull the
10 mike a bit closer to you.

11 MR. BURTON: I don't
12 particularly know how the legislation
13 goes here, of course.

14 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Pull the
15 mike a bit closer to you.

16 MR. BURTON: I'm a carpenter.
17 I don't know how this goes. I know
18 advanced geometry, trigonometry, but I
19 don't know this.

20 All I have to share with you is
21 the pain of the poor kids that can't
22 articulate it as well as myself. Little
23 boys and girls like myself come up
24 without a dream to chase. They think
25 they can run up. It ain't like that. I

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2 don't know if you know what I'm talking
3 about. I'm talking about the scourge of
4 poverty.

5 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Please speak
6 into the mike.

7 MR. BURTON: Oh, excuse me,
8 sir. West Philadelphia, born and raised.
9 Overbrook right here. Overbrook is under
10 a little bit of change.

11 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you
12 for your testimony, sir.

13 MR. BURTON: Yes, sir. Thank
14 you.

15 (Applause.)

16 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Councilman
17 Johnson.

18 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: First and
19 foremost, I want to thank all of the
20 panelists who testified on this most
21 important and critical issue, and I want
22 to also encourage you to come out to a
23 hearing next week as well sponsored by
24 the House Democratic Policy Committee on
25 March 11th specifically talking about

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2 this issue of raising the minimum wage,
3 not here only in the City of Philadelphia
4 but also in the State of Pennsylvania as
5 well.

6 Our President has set the tone
7 regarding the importance of raising the
8 minimum wage, and most recently our
9 Governor in his state budget address
10 yesterday most recently mentioned the
11 same thing. Although their level of
12 wages are less than \$15 an hour, this
13 sets the debate and the forum for raising
14 the minimum wage to \$15 an hour here in
15 the City of Philadelphia.

16 And so I will continue working
17 with the stakeholders surrounding this
18 issue regarding our next steps. I want
19 to also give a shout-out to the 15 Now
20 Coalition for their advocacy around this
21 issue and --

22 (Applause.)

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: -- and
24 Kate Goodman and team for their
25 organizing efforts. And we will continue

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2 working with them regarding this
3 particular initiative and, most
4 importantly, how we move forward.

5 So, again, we thank everyone
6 for coming out here today as well. And I
7 want to personally thank all of our
8 panelists who actually came out and sat
9 down and listened to this most important
10 issue, members of this particular
11 Committee, and I want to also thank my
12 Chairman as well for this scheduling date
13 as well.

14 Thank you.

15 (Applause.)

16 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you,
17 Councilman.

18 Thank you for your attendance.

19 Thank you for the superb testimony.

20 This hearing is recessed to the
21 call of the Chair.

22 Thank you very much.

23 (Committee on Commerce and
24 Economic Development concluded at 12:45
25 p.m.)

CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the
proceedings, evidence and objections are
contained fully and accurately in the
stenographic notes taken by me upon the
foregoing matter, and that this is a true
and correct transcript of same.

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

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