

1 Sub 1 to 2014 RES-133
2 REFERENDUM ON INCREASING THE MINIMUM WAGE IN WISCONSIN
3

4 The current minimum wage in Wisconsin is \$7.25/ hour. With that wage, a full-time
5 worker with a 40-hour a week job earns \$15,080 a year.
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7 On that salary, a resident of Dane County cannot afford the basic fundamental needs of
8 housing and food. According to a 2014 report by the National Low Income Housing
9 Coalition, to afford a 1-bedroom apartment in Dane County, one must earn \$14.27/hour,
10 double the state's hourly minimum wage amount.
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12 Dane County has serious racial disparity issues. Individuals working minimum wage
13 jobs in Dane County are disproportionately minority. According to the Race to Equity –
14 Racial Disparities in Dane County Report, released in October of 2013 by the Wisconsin
15 Council on Children and Families, 54% of African American Dane County residents earn
16 poverty wages or less, compared to 8.7% of white residents. African American children
17 in Dane County are 13 times more likely to be growing up in a family in poverty than
18 white children.
19

20 The United States is experiencing an unprecedented rise in income inequality between
21 its highest paid and minimum wage workers. According to the Pew Research Center,
22 America's current income inequality is the highest it has been since the 1920s, just
23 before and during the great depression. The top 10% of Americans earn 80% of the
24 national wealth. The top 1% earns 24% of the wealth. The average CEO in America
25 earns 380 times more than the average worker, let alone a minimum wage worker.
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27 If the minimum wage had kept pace with inflation, since 1968, it would be nearly
28 \$11/hour today. If the minimum wage had kept pace with worker productivity, since
29 1968, it would be nearly \$20/hour today. If the minimum wage kept pace with the growth
30 of wealth for the top 1% of the United States, since 1968, it would be nearly \$29/hour
31 today.
32

33 Dane County, Wisconsin, and the United States will not recover from the current
34 economic downturn if full time workers do not earn enough money to survive—to feed
35 and house themselves, their children and their families.
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37 The Center for Economic and Policy Research has found that an increase in the
38 minimum wage does not decrease the number of available jobs or negatively impact on
39 the economy and the number of jobs available. Instead, it increases job productivity and
40 decreases work turnover.
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42 Across the nation, workers have been fighting for a \$15/hour living wage. This includes
43 workers and unions in Madison, Dane County, and Wisconsin. Increasing the state
44 minimum wage is an essential first step towards ensuring survivable, living wages are
45 paid to workers. Wisconsin's minimum wage must be increased to reflect a base
46 minimum hourly wage needed to support residing within the state. But, it also must be
47 adjustable for local communities, to reflect the realities of living in areas, such as Dane
48 County, with higher costs of living.
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50 Now, therefore be it resolved, that the following referendum question be placed on the
51 November 2014 ballot:

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53 “Should the State of Wisconsin increase the minimum wage to \$10.10 per hour?”

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55 Be it finally resolved that the Dane County Clerk shall take all necessary steps to
56 implement this resolution.

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