

THE MOBILIZER

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“Jobs for All at a Living Wage”

Living Wage Amendments Would Benefit 15,000 Workers

At the June 19 Board of Supervisors meeting, Supervisor Tom Ammiano reintroduced living wage amendments that would significantly raise wages for more than 15,000 homecare workers, non-profit workers and CalWORKs parents in the welfare-to-work transition.

“It still rings true that anyone who works full time should be able to survive on what they earn,” Supervisor Ammiano said. “Sadly, that is not the case today for many people working on City contracts or at City-owned facilities. The people who clean our buildings, take care of our elderly, provide security at our airport should not have to rely on charity, or the taxpayers to make it through the month. They deserve a Living Wage.”

Since Supervisors Tom Ammiano and

Jake McGoldrick first introduced amendments to the living wage law on November 22, 2005, low-wage workers and their allies have worked for passage of the amendments by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.

While the majority of the Board of Supervisors support raising wages for more than 15,000 low-wage workers, the Board’s Budget and Finance Committee did not send the enabling legislation to the full Board for a vote.

Besides the authors of the legislation - Supervisors Ammiano and McGoldrick - Supervisors Ross Mirkarimi and Chris Daly are co-sponsors of the amendments to the Minimum Compensation Ordinance, also known as the living wage law. Supervisor Gerardo Sandoval has commit-

ted to vote in favor of the amendments.

Last year, two members of the Budget and Finance Committee, Board President Aaron Peskin and Supervisor Bevan Dufty, stalled the living wage amendments in the Budget and Finance Committee. On June 29, 2006, Supervisors Peskin and Dufty voted to table the amendments.

Low-wage workers and their allies are organizing to budge Supervisors Peskin and Dufty and move these amendments out of committee. They also are asking Supervisors Sophie Maxwell and Gerardo Sandoval to sign on as cosponsors of the amendments.

See ‘Amending Living Wage’ on page 4

Living Wage Coalition

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Higher Minimum Wages Fall Short of Living Wage

Congress has passed the first hike in the federal minimum wage in ten years. The higher minimum -- along with \$4.8 billion in business tax breaks -- was attached to a "no-strings-attached" version of an Iraq War spending bill that the President says he will sign. But the prospective increase would leave the minimum well below a living wage.

Under the legislation passed May 25, the minimum would go up from \$5.15 an hour to \$7.25 within two years. That works out to about \$15,000 a year, far less than the 2005 federal poverty threshold of about \$20,000 for a family of four. According to Let Justice Roll, a coalition of faith-and community-based organizations working to increase federal and state minimum wages, in order for the federal minimum to

have the purchasing power it did in 1968, it would have to be raised to \$8.82 an hour.

California's minimum wage went up from \$6.75 to \$7.50 per hour on January 1 under legislation passed last year. Another increase to \$8 is scheduled for January 1, 2008.

At \$8 an hour, a full-time worker earns \$16,640 a year. A 2002 report of the National Priorities Project concluded that a living wage for a family of three in California was \$17.60 an hour, or over \$36,000 a year.

San Francisco's minimum wage increased from \$8.82 to \$9.14 on Jan. 1 under a provision requiring annual cost-of-living adjustments. Neither the California nor the federal minimum wage law allows for such adjustments.

A May 2006 study by the Public Policy Institute of California calculates the poverty rate in San Francisco at 19 percent when adjusted for rental costs, placing it among the highest-poverty counties in the nation.

The San Francisco Food Bank considers 150 percent of the poverty level, or \$30,000 a year, to be the hunger threshold for a family of four in San Francisco. According to the Food Bank, by that measure, 150,000 San Franciscans - almost one in four live with the threat of hunger every day.

For a full-time worker, the city's minimum wage comes to about \$19,000 a year.

To earn \$30,000 a year, a worker's hourly wage would have to be \$14.42.

- Mark Gruberg

Raise in State Minimum Wage May Help Homecare Workers

While the state minimum wage is less than the San Francisco minimum wage of \$9.14 per hour, the increase in the state minimum wage still helps San Francisco workers by increasing the federal share of the costs for In-Home Supportive Services home health care aides.

The current federal cap in cost-sharing is 200 percent of the state minimum wage - the current cap is \$13.50 per hour. With \$10.65 per hour in wages, and the costs for payroll taxes, health benefits and administrative costs included, home care workers in San Francisco are already at the cap.

With the increase of the state minimum wage to \$7.50 per hour on January 1, 2007, the federal cap increases to \$15 per hour.

The federal government will pick up 50 percent of the costs of increases up to \$1.50 per hour for home care workers.

The state uses a different formula that is not based on the minimum wage for its share of the cost of home care workers.

If the state Director of Finance certifies in the May Revision forecast that the state General Fund revenues exceed by at least 5 percent the previous estimate, the state cap increases from \$11.10 to \$12.10 per hour.

The state share of IHSS is 32.5 percent, paying the City 32.5 cents per each hour worked by home care workers.

With the proposed level of 18,720,000 hours annually worked by around 13,000 homecare workers, this would be an additional \$6 million in state cost share in the next fiscal year.

The additional federal dollars, and possibly state dollars, which would match City funds, will make it easier for the City to raise the wages of homecare workers.

- Karl Kramer

Living Wage Coalition

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phone (415) 863-1225, fax (415) 863-1927, sflivingwage@riseup.net

Add my name endorsing the Living Wage campaign (indicate if organization for ID only)

Enclosed is a donation of \$_____. (Make out check to San Francisco Living Wage Coalition. For a tax deductible donation of \$50 or more, make out check to SF Living Wage Coalition/Agape Foundation. We also accept tax deductible vehicle donations.)

I want to get involved. Please contact me.

I would like to become a member - \$25 for individuals, \$100 per year for organizations (includes a sub to the Mobilizer).

Name _____

Title & Organization _____

Phone _____ (day) _____ (eve) Email _____

The San Francisco Living Wage Coalition

Who We Are

The Living Wage Coalition is a grass-roots movement of low-wage workers and their allies fighting for economic justice. We believe that everyone who works full time should be able to survive on what they earn, without relying on public assistance or charity to support their families.

What We Do

We educate, organize and mobilize to demand that our tax dollars and use of public property do not go to businesses that pay poverty wages.

History

The Living Wage Coalition was initiated in 1998 by labor unions, community organizations and religious congregations to develop a movement led and democratically run by low-wage workers. As a result of a grass-roots campaign, San Francisco's living wage laws - called the Minimum Compensation Ordinance and the Health Care Accountability Ordinance - require that businesses with a service contract with the City or property lease at the Airport must pay workers at least \$10.77 per hour, provide 12 paid days off per year and provide health care coverage. In addition, businesses leasing other property from the City must provide health care coverage as a condition of their lease. By the City's estimates, more than 30,000 workers have benefited.

When We Meet

We meet the 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., at 2940 16th Street, room 204 (between Mission St. and South Van Ness Ave.). Everyone is welcome.

Coordinating Committee

Robert Bustamonte, Campaign Co-director; Karl Kramer, Campaign Co-director; Tom Ladd, Recording Secretary; Phil Tryon, Treasurer; Nicky Trasviña, Volunteer Coordinator; David Frias, Mark Gruberg, Larry Lattimore, Louis Parrilla, Guillermo Ponce de Leon, Alice Rogoff, Sarah Shaker, David Williams

2006: The Year in Review

This past year, the Living Wage Coalition has achieved many successes but there is still much work to do.

Among our legislative victories, we were able to get the Supervisors to pass legislation that for the first time included workfare workers in the living wage law. This reduced the number of hours of work required of workfare workers in GA and PAES to qualify for their monthly grant from 32 hours per month to 30 hours per month.

Because of annual cost-of-living increases in the city Minimum Wage

We trained speakers to present testimony at supervisors' hearings and organized delegations of workers and supporters to supervisors' offices.

Members were interviewed on KPFA radio and wrote articles for the Bay View National Black Newspaper and the Street Sheet.

In the struggle to expand health care coverage, we met for more than a year with representatives from the Department of Public Health and the San Francisco Health Plan, and showed them that a city-administered health program



Una Flor, Un Canto y Una Poesía charm the audience at the Living Wage End of Year Celebration - December 2, 2006.

Ordinance which we campaigned for in 2004, the minimum wage in San Francisco went up to \$9.14 an hour on January 1 for all workers.

We are continuing to campaign to get that same kind of annual cost-of-living increase in the Minimum Compensation Ordinance to bring up the wages of private sector for-profit and non-profit workers who provide services to city residents.

In the campaign to raise wages for non-profit workers, home care workers and workfare workers, we outreached to GA and PAES workfare workers, CalWORKs parents, non-profit workers, and churches, and collected more than 800 signed petitions and generated hundreds of letters, emails and phone calls to supervisors.

We built a strong alliance with Church Women United and workers from the Multi-Service Center South, the City's largest homeless shelter.

was feasible. We contributed to pressuring the Department of Public Health Director Mitch Katz to support the concept of a city-administered health program and contributed to the historic passage of the San Francisco Health Access Program, which is serving as a model to the rest of the nation on how to cover people without health insurance.

Our members contributed to getting the Department of Public Health to complete a funding study for a health care plan for San Francisco's 5,000-plus taxi drivers, and during contract negotiations between SEIU and the Mayor's Office, getting the City to commit \$4.5 million over the next three years so that 1,200 part-time city workers such as library aides, custodians and health workers will receive health benefits.

-Karl Kramer

Amending Living Wage**Continued from page 1**

In addition, low-wage workers and their allies are campaigning to make sure that Mayor Gavin Newsom signs the amendments into law after the Board passes them.

With eight votes, however, the amendments would have a veto-proof majority.

Supporters of the amendments include the San Francisco Labor Council, Office and Professional Employees Local 3, Service Employees International Union Local 1021, United Healthcare Workers West SEIU, UNITE HERE Local 2, Assemblymember Fiona Ma, United Taxicab Workers, Pride at Work/AFL-CIO, Labor Council for Latin American Advancement AFL-CIO, Church Women United, Archdiocese of San Francisco Office of Public Policy, Religious Witness with Homeless People, National Lawyers



art by Rini Templeton

The Mobilizer is a publication of the San Francisco Living Wage Coalition.

Send articles and announcements for the next issue to the attention of *the Mobilizer*:

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Guild, La Raza Centro Legal, Coalition on Homelessness, South of Market Community Action Network, Harvey Milk Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Democratic Club, San Francisco People's Organization, People Organized to Win Employment Rights (POWER), and St. Boniface Neighborhood Center.

You will find the contact information for each Supervisor and the Mayor printed on this page. Thank those Supervisors sponsoring the amendments for their leadership on the issue, and help get Supervisors Dufty and Peskin, and the Mayor, off the fence.

- Robert Bustamonte

Help Low-wage Workers by Donating Goods to the...

Community Thrift Store
623 Valencia
(between 17th & 18th Sts.)

donation door - south side of
building on Sycamore Alley (one-
way from Mission to Valencia)

Donate in the name of the San
Francisco Living Wage Coalition
number 56

(on master list on door)

Open Every Day**10 a.m. to 5 p.m.****receipts for tax deductions**

"No Repair/Ready to Wear"
call 861-4910 with any questions
on acceptable donations or to
schedule donation pick up

Living Wage Coalition TV Show

"It's Time for a Living Wage"
3rd Sunday of each month
7:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Cable Channel 29

*Please make phone calls and send letters,
faxes and emails to:*

Mayor Gavin Newsom**City Hall, room 200****Phone 554-6141****Fax 554-6160****Email: gavin.newsom@sfgov.org***and***Supervisors:**

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