



**LGBTQ ALLYSHIP**  
ORGANIZING FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

## **WHY WE ARE FIGHTING FOR MINIMUM WAGE IN WASHINGTON**

### **WHAT IS THE MINIMUM WAGE INITIATIVE**

Raise Up WA, a coalition of Washington labor unions and community organizations (including LGBTQ Allyship), filed a ballot initiative in January 2016 to incrementally raise the minimum wage to \$13.50 by 2020, currently it is \$9.47, (\$11 an hour in 2017, \$11.50 an hour in 2018, \$12 in 2009 and \$13.50 an hour in 2020) and extend paid sick and safe leave to all workers in the state who do not currently have it. If this measure passes, workers will receive an hour of paid leave for every 40 hours worked (about seven days a year if you work a full-time schedule). Workers will be able to use paid sick and safe time to deal with personal illnesses; to take care of ailing family members, including domestic partners; and to seek safety when experiencing domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

**THE GROWING WAVE OF SUCCESS** In November of last year, Tacoma voted for a \$12 minimum wage, in 2014 Seattle voted to incrementally raise the minimum wage to \$15 and in 2013 Sea-Tac endorsed a \$15 an hour minimum wage. In states where they have been minimum wage initiatives, Arkansas, Alaska, Nebraska and South Dakota they have all passed. And Massachusetts, Connecticut, California and now Oregon all have paid sick days.

### **WHO WILL BENEFIT**

- One in 4 low-wage workers in Washington State, 30% of all women workers, and 40% of Black and Latino workers will benefit from raising the minimum wage. In addition, 53% of all workers over the age of 30 earn less than \$13.50 and 13% of all workers over the age of 55 earn less than \$13.50.
- The largest percentage of minimum wage workers in Washington State (21%) are in the service industry which includes food servers, bartenders, baristas, hair stylists, concierges and bellhops.
- In Seattle over 30% of Allyship's 1100 respondent LGBTQ Safety survey identified they were financially struggling and cannot pay their bills.

### **HOW WILL RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE RAISE LGBTQ WORKERS IN WASHINGTON STATE** **Locally**

- Obtaining local data on the lives of LGBTQ individuals is challenging because local governments do not track sexual orientation or gender identity.

**LGBTQ Allyship, 1105 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Seattle, 98122/ [LGBTQAllyship.org](http://LGBTQAllyship.org),  
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- However, findings from Allyship's 1100 respondent 2015 LGBTQ Safety survey indicate that 68% of Seattle respondents live paycheck to paycheck. The majority of the respondents were either transgender, queer or bisexual and 30.5% were people of color.

### **Nationally**

- Transgender people are nearly four times as likely to have a household income under \$10,000 per year as the population as a whole. (15% vs 4%)
- 7.6% of lesbian couples, compared to 5.7% of married couples live in poverty.
- African American same sex couples have poverty rates more than twice the rate of different sex married African Americans.
- 14.1% of lesbian couples and 7.7% of gay male couples receive food stamps, compared to 6.5% of different sex married couples.
- Single LGBTQ adults raising children are 3 times more likely to have incomes near the poverty line compared to single non-LGBTQ individuals raising children.
- Married or partnered LGBTQ individuals raising children are twice as likely to have household incomes near the poverty line compared to married or partnered non-LGBTQ parents.

### **HOW WILL RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE BENEFIT ALL WASHINGTONIANS**

- For a worker earning \$10 an hour, an increase to \$13.50 would mean an extra \$607 per month to spend on rent, food, utilities, or save for the future.
- 730,000 low wage workers across the state will benefit from raising the minimum wage and it will nearly provide \$2.5 billion more in earnings annually.

### **WHAT YOU CAN DO**

- Volunteer with Allyship and collect signatures at events.
- Join Allyship's Storysharing Project and tell your story on why the minimum wage will make a difference in your life.

### **RESOURCES**

LGBTQ Allyship - <http://allyship.org>

Raise Up WA - <http://www.raiseupwa.com>

Economic Opportunity Institute - <http://eoionline.org>

Washington State Budget & Policy Center - <http://budgetandpolicy.org/>

National Center for Transgender Equality - <http://www.transequality.org/>

National Gay & Lesbian Task Force Action Fund - <http://thetaskforceactionfund.org/>

The Leadership Conference Education Fund - <http://www.civilrights.org/>

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