

◆ American Friends Service Committee ◆ Bread for the World ◆ Office of Social Justice of the Christian Reformed Church ◆ Church World Service ◆ Disciples Center for Public Witness (Disciples of Christ) ◆ Ecumenical Poverty Initiative ◆ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ◆ Faith in Public Life ◆ Franciscan Action Network ◆ Friends Committee on National Legislation ◆ Interfaith Worker Justice ◆ Islamic Society of North America ◆ Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns ◆ Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity ◆ National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd ◆ National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. ◆ National Religious Campaign Against Torture ◆ NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby ◆ Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) ◆ Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism ◆ Union for Reform Judaism ◆ Unitarian Universalist Association ◆ United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries ◆ The United Methodist Church -- General Board of Church and Society ◆

April 22, 2015

Dear Mr. President,

In the faith community, we believe that every person is a child of God, that God wants shalom, that is, peace and wholeness for each of us, and that there is inherent dignity in work and the fruits of labor.

As you know, our nation generates great abundance yet only a few among us share in the bounty. This growing gap between the wealthy and everyone else is not only a political issue, but also a moral one that we are compelled by conscience to address. Indeed, it is an affront to human dignity when hardworking men and women are deprived of fully enjoying the fruits of their labor and must struggle simply to feed, clothe and shelter themselves and their children.

Your recent executive orders to boost the federal contract minimum wage to \$10.10 and to prevent wage theft and other legal violations on federal contracts begin to address this great challenge.

These orders have been transformative in the economic life of our nation, inspiring many leading business executives and public officials to follow your example. During the past year, the mayors of New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia issued their own executive orders covering municipal contractors and the CEOs of companies like The Gap, IKEA, Wal-Mart, and Target announced that they too would raise wages for their lowest paid workers. In addition, numerous cities, counties and states are now moving, or have already passed, legislation to ensure workers aren't cheated out of a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. All together, the living standards of 9 million workers will be enhanced because you expressed solidarity with workers who are struggling to survive.

As leaders of faith communities in the United States, we express our gratitude to you for exercising moral leadership by using your executive powers to start lifting low-wage workers out of poverty. Our faith traditions advocate for justice, and we recognize that your actions provide a firm foundation for rebuilding a more fair and equitable society.

However, given the scale of human suffering caused by poverty jobs, we urge you to do even more to aid our nation's most vulnerable workers by promoting *living wage and benefit standards on federal contracts* with the power of your pen. We believe that if you lead on this, our economy and labor market will once again follow your lead.

***We therefore call on you to issue a “Model Employer Executive Order” that provides a contracting preference for companies that pay living wages of at least \$15 an hour, offer good benefits and paid-time off for sickness and care-giving, provide full-time hours and predictable work schedules, as well as promote the rights of workers to bargain collectively so they do not need to strike to have their voices heard.***

By taking bold action before you leave office, you can ensure that all people have an opportunity to live into their God-given potential. Thank you for considering our request. We would gladly accept an invitation to meet with you to discuss this issue further.

Sincerely,

**The Reverend David Beckmann**

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