

Progressive Neighbors

8022 Maple Ave. Takoma Park, MD 20912

Dear Montgomery County Delegation:

We are writing to reaffirm Progressive Neighbors' strong support for the proposed increase of Maryland's Minimum Wage to \$10.10 by July 2016, and with annual indexing for cost of living (COLAs) thereafter, as well as raising tip workers' minimum wage to 70% of the State Minimum Wage.

We strongly oppose any amendments that would lower the proposed wage levels, delay implementation, strip out COLAs or protections for tip workers, or tie tax cuts for the wealthy (estate tax, income tax, etc.) or for corporations to efforts raising the minimum wage.

Research on these issues indicates that raising the minimum wage is essential for a vibrant economy in Maryland. Therefore, we call upon you to support Governor O'Malley's bill to increase the statewide minimum wage to \$8.20 an hour in July 2014, to \$9.15 an hour in July 2015, and to \$10.10 an hour in July 2016. This while letting counties set a minimum wage higher than Maryland's--as Montgomery and Prince George's have already done.

We agree with the Governor who endorsed the proposed legislation saying, "We all do better when we're all doing better." Statistical analysis, historical experience, and known facts indicate that this proposed minimum wage increase would expand Maryland's economy, and would not adversely impact employment.

The Economic Policy (EPI) reported: "Increasing the Maryland minimum wage to \$10.10 by July 2016 would raise the wages of nearly half a million (455,000) Maryland workers. These workers would receive \$721 million in additional wages over the phase-in period." EPI concluded Maryland's economy would benefit as "The increased wages would generate more than \$456 million in new economic activity and would create or support 1,600 new jobs as businesses expand to meet increased consumer demand."

Additionally, EPI reported, "The average age of affected workers is 33 years old. Teenagers comprise only 13 percent of the workers who would see a raise." Also, "Nearly a quarter (23.2 percent) of affected workers are parents. In fact, there are roughly 210,000 Maryland children with at least one parent that would get a raise."

This proposal is overwhelmingly popular with Maryland residents all across the state. The Baltimore Sun reported, "69 percent of voters surveyed said they back a proposal now being debated in the General Assembly to increase Maryland's minimum wage from the current federal level of \$7.25 an hour to \$10.10 by 2016."

Lastly, our concerns about the ongoing revenue short-fall and other pressures on the Maryland budget force us to oppose any tax cuts for the well-off and / or for corporations. We insist that any such tax cuts while Maryland is enduring deep and painful cuts to essential services would be unconscionable.

Please contact us with any questions or concerns at: PN4change@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Brian Doherty, Deborah Schumann, Wally Malakoff
Co-Chairs, Progressive Neighbors