

## A Kairos Moment for Working People in Los Angeles

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Fri, Jul 14, 2017 at 3:49 PM



## Clergy & Laity United For Economic Justice



Dear Elizabeth,

We did it!

καιρός Kairos!

תמיד בא כ' The Time has Come!

After nine months of organizing, with countless meetings, hearings, delegations, marches, fasts, and testimony, the City of Los Angeles finally passed a minimum wage increase with a pathway to \$15/hour AND wage enforcement, for hundreds of thousands of workers! The final vote is in, the jury has decided, **all people have the right to a decent wage, to sustain their families and their spirits**. The final measure is not perfect, it is not a pathway to a true [living wage](#), and there are still several components that need to be addressed, but the scales have tipped; the 13-1 vote two weeks ago and the 12-1 vote last week speak to the triumph of justice in the City of Los Angeles! Unlike [Irvine, which last week voted to decrease the minimum wage](#) (They framed their vote as an expression of "Christian values!" Groups like ours must remind people what Christianity and other religions actually believe), Los Angeles has done what is right and just.

That this was a true team effort, and we should thank all who contributed to this victory. First, [Mayor Eric Garcetti](#), thank you for starting the discussion, with a vision of \$13.25/hr by 2017 and annual increases based upon the Consumer Price Index, a brilliant move! We are lucky to have you on the side of workers! [Councilmember Mike Bonin](#), thank you for setting the stage with Raise LA for hotel workers and for not stopping and extending the mayor's vision for a pathway to \$15 by 2019! [Councilmember Curren D. Price Jr.](#) and [Councilmember Herb J. Wesson Jr.](#), thank you for shepherding this process along! [Councilmember Nury Martinez](#), thank you for your passionate plea for living wages and your ongoing commitment to the fight! [Councilmember Gil Cedillo](#) and [Councilmember Paul Koretz](#), thank you for never backing down on a wage enforcement policy, which means that **wage theft will not be tolerated in the City of Los Angeles!** And of course, thank you to [Councilmember Jose Huizar](#), who never wavered in his support for this policy, and to Councilmembers Blumenfield, Krekorian, Fuentes, Buscaino, Labonge, and O'Farrell for their affirmation that human dignity is tied to our treatment in the workplace.

But wait! There's far, far more thanks to give: The politicians ultimately voted for this policy, but in reality, day-in and day-out, an extraordinary team of community, worker, and faith-rooted organizers, people of conscience, union leaders, and a powerful coalition of community organizations coalesced around this campaign, all under the powerful leadership of the [Los Angeles County Federation of Labor](#) (led by [Rusty Hicks](#)) and co-chaired by [SEIU United Long-Term Care Workers](#) (led by [Giant of Justice, Laphonza Butler](#)). So many unions and partners deserve extra credit (forgiveness if someone is inadvertently left out, and there's simply not enough space to name everyone):

- [SEIU Local 721](#) hosts (dare I say leads?) the national [Fight for Fifteen](#) and contributed [L.A. Women Fast for Fifteen](#), with former CLUE organizer **Bea Fonseca** leading the faith-based support for that campaign. CLUE Staffmembers **Pamela Hope** and **Angie Jimenez** both joined in the fast. **Thank you, SEIU!**
- [Los Angeles Restaurant Opportunities Center](#) relentlessly and brilliantly debunked the myths of the California Restaurant Association, which cried poverty and tried to override state law, arguing that tips should go toward the minimum wage. Without their key testimony and delegations, the policy would not have had the political power to pass. **Thank you, ROC!**
- The [Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy](#) contributed researchers and organizers to the campaign. They have also taken the lead on the last piece of our platform, a comprehensive sick day policy for all workers in Los Angeles. **Thank you, LAANE!**
- The [Los Angeles Black Worker Center](#) not only contributed staff and time, they also added anti-discrimination language to the policy. While this component is yet to be fully adopted, we are all committed to taking this to the finish line. Special thanks to Rev. Dr. Lewis E. Logan, II for testifying in council chambers for this policy. **Thank you, BWC!**
- [UNITE-HERE Local 11](#) set the stage for all of this, with their Raise LA Campaign for hotel workers. Without a union driving a vision for higher wages for workers--union and non-union alike--there would be no forward momentum that would have led to this incredible moment (I remember during the Raise LA campaign for hotel workers, people were saying, "What about the rest of us?" a question that would not have been asked had UNITE-HERE not won a LIVING WAGE for hotel workers). **Thank you, UNITE-HERE!**
- So many others! The UCLA Labor Center, CHIRLA, SEIU-USWW, CLEAN Carwash Campaign, AFSCME, KIWA, UFCW, ACCE, Community Coalition, Green Dot, Food and Water Watch, Sierra Club....the list goes on and on and on...Thanks to all!

#### NEXT STEPS:

This is the beginning of a [regional strategy](#): Los Angeles must continue the march toward living wages:

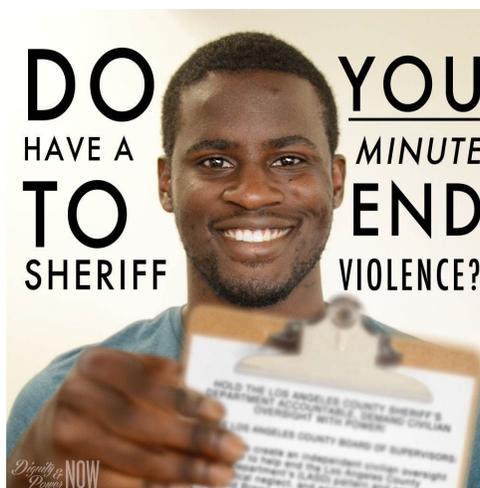
- **Los Angeles County:** Led by [Supervisor Sheila Kuehl](#), the supervisors next week will [raise the county wage with wage enforcement](#), to parallel the success at the city...this means that close to another MILLION people may see a wage increase so that they can feed their families, pay their rent, and stimulate the economy!!
- **Long Beach:** CLUE was instrumental in passing [Measure N in 2012](#), living wages for hotel workers; this is the next logical step, and a coalition already exists, and CLUE Faith-Rooted Long Beach Organizer **Nina Fernando** will lead the charge when it launches.
- **Santa Monica:** [There is already political will to raise the wage](#), and CLUE will definitely be in the center of this effort through our CLUE-Santa Monica Committee under the leadership of CLUE Faith-Rooted Organizer **Gabriella Rosco**.
- **Pasadena:** The Mayor publicly announced support for a minimum wage ordinance, and there has been a [robust community coalition](#) working toward this policy. Last week, at our CLUE-Pasadena meeting, we met with community activists
- **Culver City:** CLUE may be particularly well-equipped to lead the charge. This summer, we are devoting staff (**Rev. Sam Pullen**) and Summer Fellow time to map and research the Culver City area, with the support of the CLUE-West LA Committee.
- **Orange County:** With the backwards step in Irvine (see the beginning of this newsletter), we know that we must be vigilant there. CLUE-LA is increasingly working with our friends in Orange County at CLUE-OC, and by the end of this year, we should become simply CLUE. With that in mind, we are keeping our eyes open to pursue higher wages in Orange County.
- **Anywhere else imaginable:** Got ideas? Let us know! No city is too small for consideration!

So much to be grateful for; so much to be thankful for! However, we still have so much work to do, and not only surrounding wages...

#### CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT OF THE LA SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

In light of the mixed verdict in the Ezell Ford slaying, our work at the County of Los Angeles seems more relevant than ever. We still must remember that **#BlackLivesMatter**.

Last Friday, I attended what might be the last meeting of the Working Group for the establishment of a Civilian Oversight Commission, chaired by CLUE friend **Dean Hansell** (appointed by Sheila Kuehl). The arduous efforts at the County to ensure that the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department operates in a racially just and community-based fashion, protecting all people in the county with a transparent operation, and with power to hold law enforcement accountable, has really been extraordinary, and we owe thanks to the supervisors and the individuals they appointed to the Working Group, especially Mr. Hansell, Herman Vera (appointed by Supervisor Hilda Solis), and Vincent Harris (appointed by Mark Ridley-Thomas) who, together with Inspector General Max Huntsman, voted to create a Commission that is virtually law enforcement-free and with teeth to hold the Sheriff's Department accountable.



[Dignity and Power Now](#) and The Coalition to End Sheriff Violence are hosting a petition on the leading civil rights petition platform [ColorOfChange](#) to put pressure on the LA Board of Supervisors to implement five demands, to reinforce most of the recommendations of the working group. The petition signatures will be delivered to the Board of Supervisors following a press conference outside of Kenneth Hahn Hall, on the day the working group delivers its proposal to the supervisors.

**We need as much support as possible.** Right now they have 380 supporters, but we are working toward upwards of 10,000. Sign, share, and send it out to your lists!

The Demands:

- **#1 SUBPOENA POWER:** The working group voted to recommend that the supervisors put a vote on the ballot to change the Los Angeles County Charter to grant the civilian oversight commission the power to subpoena the sheriff's department. Strong petition support helps ensure that the Board of Supervisors puts subpoena power on the ballot.
- **#2 NINE MEMBERS, FOUR FROM COMMUNITY ORGS:** The working group voted for a composition proposal where the supervisors appoint all nine members, but ours will still be included in the report to the supervisors who will make the final decision. Strong petition support lets the supervisors know that the community option should be taken seriously.
- **#3 GUIDE THE WORK OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL:** Most civilian oversight commissions work directly with an Inspector General who audits, investigates, and oversees the department's handling of complaints and conducts other investigations as directed by the commission. Strong petition support ensures that the Commission also oversees Inspector General Max Huntsman, who has already agreed to this.
- **#4 NO LAW ENFORCEMENT, CURRENT OR RETIRED:** The working group voted that no current law enforcement and no retired Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department employees should serve on the commission. Strong petition support ensures that the supervisors at a minimum implements that recommendation.
- **#5 INDEPENDENT LEGAL COUNSEL:** In cases of excessive force, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department is represented by County Counsel during legal proceedings. It is important that County Counsel not also play an advisory role to the Civilian Oversight Commission, as that would be a conflict of interest. Strong petition support will bring this little talked about issue to light.

**TAKE ACTION:** First and foremost, please [sign the petition](#)! Share the petition link through your email lists and social networks. Print out the petition to collect signatures in person! You can then enter the digital petition manually or send them to the Dignity and Power Now office or to CLUE for manual entry.

#### MARCH FOR JUSTICE AT EL SUPER!



Join us, as we take to the streets to protest unlawful firings and other worker rights violations at the El Super grocery chain. Stand with us to let El Super know we demand good jobs and good employers in our communities!

**WHO?** Hundreds of El Super workers, elected leaders and community supporters

**WHERE?** [Highland Park Recreation Center](#), 6150 Piedmont Ave, Los Angeles, California 90042

**WHEN?** Wednesday, June 17th at 11am, 2015

**WHY?** <http://www.boycottsuper.org/>

Si Se Puede!

#### A Final Note

With the summer upon us, this week we welcome our latest community of Ziegler Young Religious Leadership Fellows to our efforts at Building a Just and Sacred Society. They will be trained this week in Faith-Rooted Organizing, meeting important figures in our movement, participating in the El Super action on Wednesday, and learning all that they need to be impactful, strategic, and strengthened as they pursue their professional ambitions. Wish them lots of luck this summer!

We hope to hear from you or see you soon, at an action near you....

Blessings!

Rabbi Jonathan Klein, CLUE