



localprogress.org

September 4, 2018

We, the undersigned progressive municipal elected officials of Texas, are jointly announcing our commitment to raise the wage floor for thousands of our constituents to \$15 an hour. As elected leaders dedicated to empowering working people, we strongly support passage of this critical raise to allow all public servants, and as many private employees as possible, to have dignity in their workplace. As we pass our public budgets in the coming weeks after Labor Day, we will jointly chart a path to fighting for \$15 for everyone in Texas.

The State of Texas has banned minimum wage increases above the federal minimum wage of \$7.25/hour, keeping families working at poverty wages. As a result, [Texas has been ranked #44](#) out of the 50 states in wage policies by Oxfam America. We stand in strong opposition to being ranked 44th out of 50 states.

We, as local elected officials in Texas, believe that hard work should translate into fair pay, regardless of what the State of Texas' ban on raising the minimum wage says. Standing idly by while working families have to decide between putting food on the table or keeping the lights on is not a fiscal choice, it is a moral one. Raising the wage floor would not only lift up city, school board, county, and contract employees, it would also recognize their contributions to making sure our localities run effectively and efficiently. Achieving a \$15/hour minimum wage for public employees, as well as private employees doing public work, would improve the quality of life for many families in our communities and would help our jurisdictions retain integral staff.

Localities across the country have already raised their wages in an effort to support their hard-working residents. Other cities, including Sacramento and Tucson, set their wage rate to rise with inflation. As well, Texans have started doing what they can, where they can. Dallas, TX, which passed their living wage ordinance of \$10.37 in 2015, set it to adjust annually to meet the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's calculated living wage for a single adult in their city. In 2016, San Marcos, TX, added a requirement that all businesses seeking an economic incentive from the City would pay no less than \$15/hour for every employee at said business.

We were elected to take acts of conscience by our constituents. We cannot wait for others to do our work for us. Therefore, we the undersigned, resolve to put our money where our mouth is and start with our budgets and our contracts. We commit to fighting at home to raise all of our own employees to \$15/hour, to raise private employees under contract to do essential governmental work up to \$15, and to advocate for our right to self-governance to do more than that at the State and Federal levels. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. understood budgets as "moral documents." It is out of that moral obligation that we come together and support the dignity of the hard-working Texas families that build, feed, and clean our jurisdictions.

If you are a local elected official in Texas who would like to sign on to this joint effort, email mfulbright@populardemocracy.org.

Sincerely,

Alexsandra Anello, El Paso Councilmember
Greg Casar, Austin City Councilmember
Justin Henry, Dallas ISD Trustee
Tartisha Hill, Balch Springs Mayor Pro Tempore
Philip Kingston, Dallas Councilmember
Ann Kitchen, Austin Councilmember
Adam Medrano, Dallas Deputy Mayor Pro Tempore
Nina Morris, Lancaster Deputy Mayor Pro Tempore
Omar Narvaez, Dallas Councilmember
Candice Quarles, DeSoto Councilmember
Brian Rowland, Prairie View Councilmember
La'Shadion Shemwell, McKinney Council Member
Carl Sherman, DeSoto ISD Trustee
David Stout, El Paso County Commissioner
Candace Valenzuela, Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD Trustee

www.localprogress.org

Local Progress is a network of progressive local elected officials from around the country united by our shared commitment to equal justice under law, shared prosperity, sustainable and livable cities, and good government that serves the public interest. Local Progress has more than 40 members in the State of Texas. Local Progress is staffed by the Center for Popular Democracy.