**Minimum Wage - Minimum Wage increases are needed to allow workers to meet increased living costs and pay their bills.**

**Federal Minimum Wage** - The last federal increase was eight years ago (2009). The White House proposed a minimum wage increase to at least $10.10 an hour from the current $7.25.

The **Raise the Wage Act of 2015** was introduced in Congress to raise the federal wage incrementally to $12.00 by 2020 and index future increases to 50% of the US median wage. No further action was taken as of now.

A national poll released in January 2015 showed that 75 percent of Americans—representing all demographics—support raising the federal minimum wage to over $12 per hour.

There is a **Fight for $15** which started with Fast Food Workersbut has caught momentum. In 2015, policy makers in 14 cities, counties or states have approved **$15 minimum wage laws.** Over one dozen legislative or ballot proposals are expected in 2016. By 2022, California and parts of New York will have a $15 minimum wage.

85 percent of Small-Business employers already are paying above the National Minimum Wage.

The US has the lowest minimum wage of any major western country. Three quarters of minimum wage earners are 20 years or older

*A minimum wage earner must work 64 hrs/wk for 52 wks to keep a family of 4 above the poverty line ($24,250).*

**Five reasons to raise the Minimum wage:**

1] it will help the economy

2] it reduces poverty and inequality

3] it reduces the wage gap for women and minorities

4] indexing the minimum wage is common sense

 5] it is consistent with American values

*Minimum wage increases lead to statistically significant reductions in SNAP enrollment and spending. Tax payer spending with $12.00 Minimum Wage would decline by $5.3 billion annually.*

**Fair Minimum Wage Statement**….*Higher wages benefit business by increasing consumer purchasing power, reducing costly employee turnover, raising productivity, and improving product quality, customer satisfaction, and company reputation.*

***Sample letter to your member of Congress on Minimum Wage:***

Dear Congressman/woman / Senator [Name],

I am one of your constituents, living in [City, State], and am writing you today to urge you to support raising the minimum wage to at least the $12.00 per hour proposed in the **Raise the Wage Act** to catch up with 1968! Today minimum wage workers are making less, inflation adjusted, than they did 45 years ago in 1968. In those 45 years, the minimum wage has lost one third of its value at the same time that average CEO compensation has skyrocketed over 900%!

Raising the minimum wage to $12.00 per hour would stimulate our economy by benefitting at least 38 million workers! Studies have shown that, despite what critics say, raising the minimum wage does NOT increase unemployment. In fact, a report from the Economic Policy Institute shows that raising the minimum wage to $12.00 would produce increase earnings of more than $80 billion over the next 5 years.

Opponents of raising the minimum wage will say that raising the minimum wage will harm jobs, that it will primarily hurt small businesses, or that most minimum wage workers are teenagers working part time jobs. But studies have refuted all three of these points: several studies have shown that previous increases to the minimum wage did not increase unemployment, two-thirds of minimum wage workers are employed by large, profitable corporations, and over 75 % of minimum wage workers are at least 20 years old.

On top of all of this, poll after poll has shown that at least 75 % of Americans support increasing the minimum wage and indexing it to inflation. Can I count on you to stand with the majority of likely voters, to support better quality jobs for 38 million hard-working Americans, and to work to increase the minimum wage to $12.00 per hour to catch up with what workers made 45 years ago?

Sincerely,

**Talking Points:**

**Connecticut Minimum Wage**

Out of Connecticut’s workforce of 1.7 million people, it is estimated 70,000 to 90,000 workers now earn the minimum wage.

Connecticut's minimum wage is now $9.60 and will increase to $10.10 on January 1, 2017.

Incentivizing companies to raise their wages to close to a living wage would reduce workers’ dependency on public services and help mitigate actual or pending public deficits.

*Single minimum wage workers must put in 83 hours a week to cover the basics.*

*Connecticut’s Living Wage is $19.08/hr for a single adult.*

*Single parent with one child it would be $28.99*

*Single parent with two children it would be $40.48.*

It takes $24.72/hr wage to afford 2 bedroom rental in CT, …..*more than 2.58 Minimum Wage jobs!*