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CITY COUNCIL PLAN TO HIKE MINIMUM WAGE FOR GREENSBORO WORKERS A WIN FOR CITY AND WORKING FAMILIES

Move boosting pay to a \$15-an-hour “family wage” for full-time city workers would be a first in the South

Greensboro, N.C. — Workers and advocates who have been pushing for a higher minimum wage for local government employees applauded the 7-2 vote today by the Greensboro City Council to develop a final policy that will increase the minimum wage rates to \$10.00 an hour for part-time city employees and \$12.00 an hour for full-time city employees, with a goal of raising wages for city workers to a minimum of \$15.00 an hour by the year 2020. Currently, Greensboro city workers are paid the state minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour.

With the federal and state minimum wages stagnant for years, advocates have been pushing for a “family wage,” which would allow families to pay for the basic necessities like housing, food, transportation, and child care. According to the North Carolina Justice Center, it would take \$30,746 annually for one adult and one child to make ends meet in Guilford County. Raising the wage to \$15 an hour by 2020 will bring wages in line with the actual cost of living.

“It’s difficult to watch people work hard and then wonder how they are going to give their children the best start, to provide them with a good foundation to become the successful people that you want them to be,” said Sherry Crosby, whose husband Calvin has worked as a Greensboro parks and recreation custodian for over 10 years.

Carolyn Smith, North Carolina state director for Working America, praised the city workers for banding together and pushing the City Council to take up the issue.

“This is a step in the right direction for Greensboro and working families,” Smith said of the planned increase. “What we’ve heard from city workers is that they love Greensboro; they’re loyal to their jobs, but they struggle to take care of their families. This vote moves us closer to creating a family wage that will strengthen our community and gives businesses an incentive to follow suit.”

“It’s great to see elected leaders standing with the women and families of Greensboro,” Smith added.

City workers and advocates have put pressure on the City Council in recent weeks to increase the minimum wage for city workers. On July 28, Working America sponsored a city forum to educate Greensboro citizens about the benefits of increasing the minimum wage for city workers. Several city workers described the challenges of supporting a family on \$7.25 an hour and their need for a family wage.

“From the beginning, we knew the right thing to do was to boost the minimum wage for our city workers—we just have to figure out the plan,” said City Councilman Jamal Fox. “We will continue to listen to workers, many of whom have told

us how hard it is to make it in the current economy. We want to make sure that we're doing what's necessary to take care of our city."

Congresswoman Alma Adams (D-Greensboro), who spearheaded the state's first minimum wage increase in nine years while serving in the North Carolina General Assembly, joined Working America in support of the minimum wage hike.

"There is no reason why someone who works to make our city a better place should struggle to afford life's basic necessities," said Congresswoman Adams. "I am proud the Greensboro City Council took this major step to give Greensboro City workers a wage they can live on."

Working America has been advocating for a higher minimum wage for city workers along with the Communications Workers of America, NC RAISE UP, Interactive Resource Center, the Worthy Wage Campaign, NC State AFL-CIO, Action NC, the NC Justice Center, Ecumenical Poverty Initiative, Beloved Community Center of Greensboro, and the Teamsters.

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Working America is the fastest-growing organization for working people who don't have the benefit of a union on the job. Working America has over 43,000 active members in North Carolina.