

RESOLUTION #1

Endorse 15 Now Campaign in South Central Wisconsin

WHEREAS, the recent movements of low wage workers and allies for a higher minimum wage and employer recognition of our unions has begun to strengthen the labor movement not only for fast food workers but also serves to support the struggles of workers already collectively organized.

WHEREAS, the demand for a real living wage, to set the minimum wage at \$15 an hour, and unions rights have been the main inspiration of this new wave of pre-unionization and struggles by low wage workers. Low wage jobs account for 76% of job growth since 2010- already unionized labor can only be strengthened by the demand for a higher minimum wage and standing in solidarity with low wage workers seeking the benefits of union representation. Furthermore the AFL-CIO has called for more cooperation between union and non-union workers and organization and organized labor can do this by supporting the \$15 min. wage call.

WHEREAS, local developments suggest it is a key moment to act. The city of Madison 2004 ordinance for a \$7.75 per hour minimum was blocked by state pre-emption and ten years later minimum wage all over the state is no higher than the federal minimum. Furthermore, state legislators recently made a serious attempt to eliminate the living wage ordinances that have worked well for over 15 years in Wisconsin. However, Minnesota just decided to move to \$9.50/hr. Minimum.

WHEREAS, in this economic crisis, working people and our families cannot wait for a drawn out period for increases in our living standards. Over three-fourths of those working at the current minimum wage are over 20 and the majority are the sole providers for their families. Studies have shown a significant increase in the minimum wage to \$15 an hour will not significantly increase prices but is estimated will actually inject around \$450 billion dollars into the economy each year.

WHEREAS, the victory of working people achieving such a significant increase in the minimum wage anywhere around the country would be a tremendous boost to the confidence and credibility of the labor movement in combatting the current situation of the decline of union membership.

WHEREAS, the development of a unified national campaign such as 15Now is a crucial step in unifying the struggles of unions and workers across the country for a higher minimum wage and union representation for currently unrepresented low-wage workers and rebuilding the strength of labor. The 15Now campaign has been endorsed by several other union locals throughout the country.

WHEREAS, this movement affects our local union and state employees directly. At least 4,100 classified employees at the state and UW make under \$15/hr.*; WPEC's Fiscal and Staff Services job classification 07-05 starts at under \$14/hr for FY14-15 in the compensation plan; state employees need to work together to reverse cuts of 10-15% in take home pay from 2011 concentrated on the lowest wage earners; thousands of LTEs and contractors with the state also get under \$15/hr; the state and UW have begun a widespread bonus plan that is unjust and inequitable and the \$15 min. would push compensation in a more equitable direction; the state and

UW do not honor the “Living Wage” that are observed by city and county governments; An Injury to One is an Injury to All; raising floor wages would put upward pressure on wages for those in the middle tiers of state employment like most WPEC members; raising wages would stabilize the public sector, improve our professions, and help the recipients of the public programs we administer;

RESOLVED, that WPEC officially endorse the 15Now campaign and its struggle to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour.

RESOLVED, WPEC will become an active part of the 15Now campaign in South Central Wisconsin, educating members on the \$15 minimum wage demand, mobilizing our membership to 15Now meetings and actions going forward, and petitioning for a non-binding public policy question to be put on the ballot in Dane County in November, as well as future actions at specific work sites where workers receive less than \$15 an hour.

* According to the latest Affirmative Action report on classified employees with the state and UW.

Submitted by Barb Smith