



Coalition on Homelessness  
and Housing in Ohio

**COHHIO**

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## **Local Advocacy Groups Urge Passage of Federal Minimum Wage with NO STRINGS ATTACHED**

COLUMBUS – In anticipation of a Wednesday U.S. Senate vote, the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio, Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks and the Ohio Partners for Affordable Energy today called on Senator George Voinovich to reject any amendments and to vote for a clean minimum wage bill. The vote would end debate and bring up a simple, straightforward vote on raising the minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour by 2009. It will take 60 votes to end debate.

“This vote will get minimum wage workers a raise faster without getting bogged down in procedural hurdles and delays if tax incentives for small businesses are added to the bill,” said Lisa Hamler Fugitt, executive director of the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks. “Congress has increased the minimum wage nine times since the original legislation was passed. It has been increased eight times without tax reductions to small business, under both Republican and Democratic administrations.”

Adjusted for inflation, the minimum wage is at its lowest level in 50 years. Workers earning the minimum wage will make only \$10,712 over the next year, \$4,367 under the poverty threshold for a family of three. Nearly 13 million people would likely benefit from the increase – 5.6 million directly and 7.4 million indirectly. According to a new *Los Angeles Times/Bloomberg* [poll](http://www.latimes.com/news/politics/la-na-poll19jan19,1,6591833,print.story?coll=la-headlines-politics), 81% of the American public — including 66% of self-described conservatives -- support the clean minimum wage bill.

“All boats should rise with the tide – not just the yachts,” said Bill Faith, executive director of the Coalition. “The federal minimum wage has not been increased in nearly a decade, making this the longest span without a minimum wage increase since the wage was first implemented. While we

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raised the minimum wage in Ohio in November, the federal increase will further improve the hourly rate for minimum wage workers from \$6.85 to \$7.25. Tomorrow, Senator Voinovich has the opportunity to do the right thing by supporting a clean bill to raise the federal minimum wage."

A recently released report entitled *The Minimum Wage, CEO Pay and the Gap in Achieving the American Dream* found that by 11:02 a.m. on January 2, 2007, the CEO's of the nations top companies (those with \$1 billion or more in annual revenue) had already made more in the first two hours and two minutes of the first work day of the year than a full time minimum wage worker will make in all of 2007 at the current rate of \$5.15 an hour.

It's shameful that so many American families have been living in borderline poverty despite working full time," said David Rinebolt, executive director of Ohio Partners for Affordable Energy. "Increasing the minimum wage is about basic fairness to working Americans. Small business creates 9 out of 10 new jobs and tax structure they live with deserves a separate debate and comprehensive approach. We call on Senator Voinovich to pass the minimum wage with no strings attached."