

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 1, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Kamala D. Harris
Vice President of the United States
White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden and Vice President Harris:

As the United States continues to battle dual economic and public health crises, it is more important now than ever that we deliver relief to Americans. Eighty-one million people cast their ballots to elect you on a platform that called for a \$15 minimum wage. We urge you to keep that promise and call on the Presiding Officer of the Senate to refute the Senate Parliamentarian's advice on a Byrd Rule point of order and maintain the \$15 minimum wage provision in the American Rescue Plan.

This has significant historical precedent. In 1967, Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey disregarded the Parliamentarian's advice while pushing to reduce the filibuster threshold from two-thirds of those present to three-fifths. Vice President Humphrey did the same again in 1969. Ultimately, Republican Vice President Nelson D. Rockefeller partnered with future Vice President Walter Mondale and succeeded in 1975 while again refuting the parliamentarian.¹

For the last twelve years, working Americans have struggled to get by under a federal minimum wage that remains stuck at \$7.25 per hour. Since its establishment in 1938 as part of the New Deal, the federal minimum wage has never gone this long without a boost.² In fact, its purchasing power has fallen by nearly twenty-five percent due to inflation since its last increase in 2009.³ As you know, this policy has disproportionately hurt women and Black and Brown workers. Women make up nearly sixty percent of hourly workers making less than \$15 per hour despite comprising only fifty percent of the overall hourly workforce. The disparate impact is even starker among Black and Brown workers, who make up only thirty-six percent of the hourly workforce yet work in nearly half of all jobs earning less than \$15 per hour.

We must act now to prevent tens of millions of hardworking Americans from being underpaid any longer. The outdated and complex Byrd rule rooted in restricting progress must not be an impediment to improving people's lives. You have the authority to deliver a raise for millions of Americans. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

¹ <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-111shrg62210/html/CHRG-111shrg62210.htm>

² <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/minimum-wage/history>

³ https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm

Cori Bush
Member of Congress

Rashida Tlaib
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Jamaal Bowman
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Mondaire Jones
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Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress

CC:

Ronald Klain, Chief of Staff to the President of the United States

Tina Flournoy, Chief of Staff to the Vice President of the United States