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 The outdated and complex Byrd rule rooted in restricting progress must not be an impediment to improving people’s lives.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](https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-111shrg62210/html/CHRG-111shrg62210.htm)
² [https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/minimum-wage/history](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/minimum-wage/history)
³ [https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm](https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm)
Cori Bush  
Member of Congress

Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress

Jamaal Bowman  
Member of Congress

Mondaire Jones  
Member of Congress

Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress

Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress

Bennie G. Thompson  
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress

Marie Newman  
Member of Congress

Veronica Escobar  
Member of Congress

Raúl Grijalva  
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress

Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress

Andy Levin  
Member of Congress

Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress

Jesús G. “Chuy” García  
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress

Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress

Ritchie Torres  
Member of Congress

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