

For Immediate Release

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Gov. Jerry Brown signs legislation raising California's minimum wage to \$15

San Francisco and Marin, CA, April 4, 2016 — YWCA San Francisco & Marin celebrates as Governor Brown signs a \$15 minimum wage into state law today. YWCA sees raising the minimum wage as directly connected to its mission to eliminate racism and empower women, and the organization contributed actively to the coalition campaigns that brought this victory for low-income workers. Now on track for a historic minimum wage increase, low-wage workers in California are majority women and nearly three-fourths people of color, making fair wages an essential step towards equity and addressing California's highest-in-the-nation wealth and income gaps.

The deal for \$15, passed by the Senate and Assembly last Thursday and signed into law by Governor Brown today, comes swiftly on the heels of the Fair Wage Act ballot initiative from SEIU-UHW that qualified for the ballot with overwhelming support statewide. YWCA collected signatures and led a Marin County coalition of supporters to build momentum for that campaign. Staff and client volunteers met with elected officials and community members to generate support and educate community members about the minimum wage's connection to racial justice and women's empowerment. "This is a huge victory in the fight for equity," said Jane Winter, YWCA SF & Marin Executive Director. "No one who works full time should have to struggle to afford the basics."

The bill will raise California's minimum wage to \$11 in 2017 and then gradually increase it a dollar a year until it reaches \$15 in 2021. Once the minimum wage reaches \$15, it will automatically be adjusted each year to keep pace with the cost of living. California's minimum wage is currently \$10 an hour, which amounts to less than \$21,000 a year for a full-time worker.

A higher minimum wage will help more than 3.3 million workers and their families, including 200,000 seniors and millions of children, many who go to bed hungry. It will also particularly help women and people of color in California, who make up more than half of minimum wage workers. A higher minimum wage also is good for California's economy, as workers spend their increased earnings at local businesses, and it will reduce reliance on government programs like Medi-Cal.

**YWCA IS ON
A MISSION**

eliminating racism
empowering women
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