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**Unitarian
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Association**

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For immediate release

Joint Statement on Raising the Minimum Wage - A Moral Imperative

July 18, 2013

The Rev. Peter Morales, president of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), and the Rev. Bill Schulz, president and CEO of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), have issued this joint statement in support of legislation to raise minimum wages in the United States:

We've been told we're in the middle of an economic recovery. But the truth is that while the stock market is closing at unprecedented highs, workers who make minimum wage are not recovering — they're barely putting food on the table. Millions of low-wage workers in our country work hard day in and day out and still can't afford life's basic necessities. They are the restaurant servers feeding us, the people caring for our elderly or sick loved ones, and the workers keeping our buildings clean. They are our brothers, mothers, friends, congregants, and community members — and they are suffering silently, choosing between buying food, getting to work, and paying the rent.

This is an outrage that our moral values insist be remedied. And there is a simple common-sense solution: we must raise the federal minimum wage to a living wage.

How can we expect hardworking people to support themselves and their families on \$7.25 an hour? That's just \$15,080 a year for a full-time worker, which is \$3,000 below the poverty line for a family of three. While minimum wage has stagnated and left workers further and further behind, income inequality is now at an all-time high. The CEOs of the 500 largest U.S. companies make an average salary of \$10.5 million.

It is time to ask that everyone share in corporate success, not just a handful of executives. As people of faith, we believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and raising the minimum wage vital in ensuring that dignity.

We believe in models in which employers treat their workers as human beings rather than as just another cost of doing business. We believe in putting purchasing power back into the hands of workers, who will spend those dollars in their local communities. We believe in an economy that is strong because workers have enough to live on and create demand for business. Better wages mean a real recovery: sustainable jobs, thriving families, and flourishing economies.

Legislation that raises the minimum wage is an important part of creating this vision. We will hold our legislators to the highest standard in pressing for laws that do the following:

- Raise the minimum wage closer to a living wage, ensuring working families can meet their basic needs with dignity

- Index the minimum wage to inflation, so that worker purchasing power is no longer eroded as a result of Congressional inaction

- Significantly increase the minimum wage for tipped employees, which currently is an abominable \$2.13 an hour, and anchor it to at least 70 percent of the regular minimum wage

This is more than a political issue — it is a moral imperative. And legislation is just the starting point. We must act as our faith dictates; we must be true to the values that we hold dear.

We stand in solidarity with people throughout the country struggling to survive on minimum wage. We call upon all people of faith to join us. And we come together to urge this: stop making workers pay the price for corporate greed — raise the minimum wage!

For more information contact pr@uua.org.

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