

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION WORKSHEET
Advocating for a Raise in the Minimum Wage Statewide

I. List the Learning(s) that this recommendation is addressing

In 1968, the federal minimum wage reached a peak, which with inflation, would equal \$9.34 today, by comparison with the actual rate of \$5.15. The economy was not hurt back then. Jobs flourished. The same thing could be done today, over a period of three years.

The state and the federal minimum wage at this time is \$5.15 per hour. About 5% of the population is paid at that level, but another 15% are paid below \$7.50 per hour. About 38% of those paid of the \$5.15 level are teenagers. Many of them and all of the adults paid at that level are members of families that are struggling to survive on a daily basis. The issues of health, incarceration, and family breakdown are associated with these wage levels.

- **WRITE THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION** (limit focus to one subject or action item, more than one recommendation may be needed to address a particular learning):**

We propose that the PPA conveners and steering committee look at the results of the survey cited below, and add their voices to the members of the legislature who might consider making such a change. Each of the partners in the PPA can be advocates for a minimum wage of \$7 per hour or more, beginning with the Clarke County Commission's session with the new legislative delegation.

- **Identify any research, or other kinds of information that was used to craft this recommendation.** (add additional sheets as necessary)

A statewide survey has been conducted by the UGA Survey Research Center, asking for public opinion on the idea of **raising the minimum wage** in the state. Three questions provided rather compelling evidence: (a) "Do you think the minimum wage should be increased?" 89.7% said, "yes." (b) "To what level do you think they should be raised?" (options provided). 68.7% responded at the level of \$7 per hour or higher, including 45.9% at the level of \$7.50. And (c) "Would a candidate's position on this issue affect how you vote?" 53.8% said, "yes."

Twenty-nine of the states, post-election 2006, have raised their statewide minimum wage. Also, it has been found in 2005 that the states that had raised the minimum wage had created jobs at the level of 6%, while the states that did not raise it have created jobs at the level of 4%. Retail and small businesses are the primary beneficiaries. Raising the minimum wage creates a healthier economy because there is more money circulating at the local level. **"States With a Minimum Wage Above the Federal Level have had Faster Small Business and Retail Growth," Fiscal**

Policy Institute, March, 2006

<http://www.fiscalpolicy.org/FPISmallBusinessMinWage.pdf>

- **Identify additional research or information that could help clarify this committee recommendation. List potential sources if possible.**

The Georgia Living Wage Coalition is searching for senators and house members of the legislature who will be open to supporting a raise in the minimum wage. Senator Robert Brown, District 26, has agreed to sponsor the bill. Further research could be done on the perspectives and political positions of the leaders of the legislature and then on all of the members. This can begin with our locally elected legislators.

- **Indicate people or groups that we need to talk to help clarify this committee recommendation. List any recommended locations.**

The co-chairs of the Georgia Living Wage Coalition are Cindia Cameron, director of Women's 9 to 5 in Atlanta and Sandra Robertson, director of the Georgia Citizens Coalition on Hunger. They will be launching this campaign in Athens on December 11, 2006. Ms. Cameron is chair of the legislative committee of the campaign. Ms. Robertson is chair of the grassroots organizing committee. Mr. Charles Winfrey is chair of the media committee.

- **What kind of action or resources would be necessary to implement the recommendation?**

As noted in the campaign committee structure, we believe it will take a considerable effort assessing and persuading members of the legislature. Grassroots organizing is essential in other parts of the state, and we do not expect the PPA Conveners to take on that project. Media are essential to the task of spreading the message, and we do anticipate that the Atlanta TV channels will be helpful. For example, WSB, Channel 2, has expressed interest.

- **Indicate what forces and influences are likely to occur that will support or oppose implementation.**

Forces that support (please list):

The data indicate that women are strong supporters statewide. Democrats, minorities, and anyone making less than \$40,000 annually are strong supporters. There are sources of support that one might not anticipate. For example, Wal-Mart nationally has expressed support for it, knowing that they already pay all of their workers above the \$7.50 level and knowing that raising the minimum wage will increase their sales and revenues.

The Economic Policy Institute and the Fiscal Policy Institute are research organizations that tend to support such policies.

Forces that oppose (please list):

There are ideological opponents who believe that raising the minimum wage will result in loss of jobs and business profits. The “Employment Policy Institute” is a research organization that is dedicated to opposing any kind of mandate on wages.