

PROCLAMATION



City and County of Denver

Proclamation No. 19-0143

URGING THE COLORADO STATE LEGISLATURE TO PASS LOCAL WAGE OPTION

WHEREAS, communities across Colorado are struggling to keep up with the rapidly rising cost of living, which varies greatly between different communities, but state law prohibits local governments from enacting jurisdiction-wide minimum wage laws that meet their unique circumstances; and

WHEREAS, minimum wage workers in many of Colorado's communities are struggling to afford housing, health care, child care, and other necessities; and

WHEREAS, average rents in Colorado have increased six times faster than people's earnings between 2012 and 2016, and hardworking Coloradans should not be forced out of their communities because wages are not keeping up with the local costs of rents and other living costs; and

WHEREAS, research and economic data show that poverty is concentrated among people of color, children, people with lower educational attainment, and female-headed households; the opportunity for higher wages for these families where they are enacted by their local governments would provide these households more disposable income and more time to spend with their children; and

WHEREAS, income has consistently been shown to be one of the strongest predictors of health status, and poverty and low incomes have been linked with premature mortality and low life-expectancy; a rise in household income through a local minimum wage in Denver or other higher-cost local communities could result in significant public health benefits for workers and their families; and

WHEREAS, increases in the minimum wage boost job retention, earnings and consumer spending in a community, and have been proven to result in residents spending more money in the local economy; and

WHEREAS, there is no evidence that raising the minimum wage leads to notable price increases or job loss; in fact, rural Colorado added 6,000 jobs following the 33 percent increase in the minimum wage in 2006 and small businesses have grown faster in states with higher minimum wages than those who did not raise it; and

WHEREAS, the public welfare, health, and prosperity of Denver would benefit from our city's opportunity to go above the state-wide minimum wage in our community to promote a better quality of life for Denver workers and their families based on our higher cost of living; and

WHEREAS, the residents of Colorado benefit when local governments have the power to act on the values and needs of their residents and to promote fair and accessible local economies.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER:

Section 1. That the Council urges the Colorado State Legislature to pass a Local Wage Option to allow local jurisdictions to enact minimum wage laws above the statewide minimum based on their specific needs.

Section 2. That the Clerk of the City and County of Denver shall affix the seal of the City and County of Denver to this proclamation, and that copies be transmitted to: Governor Jared Polis, House Speaker KC Becker, Senate President Leroy Garcia, State Representative Jovan E. Melton, State Representative Rochelle Galindo, State Senator Dominick Moreno, State Senator Jessie Danielson, and the Colorado People's Alliance (COPA).

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL February 25, 2019

PRESIDENT

SPONSOR