

Low-wage workers fighting for a living wage

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2. Inclusion of CalWORKS parents in the Living Wage law.

CalWORKS grants are diverted to private employers that pay them out as wages at the San Francisco minimum wage of \$8.82 per hour.

Employers would be required to supplement wages for CalWORKS parents to \$10.77 per hour.

3. Annual cost-of-living increases based on the Bay Area Consumer Price Index to keep up with inflation.

With this year’s Consumer Price Index increase, the hourly rate in the living wage law would rise to \$11.04.

Improving wages for the least-paid workers performing services for residents improves the standard-of-living of all San Francisco workers, helps revitalize the City’s economic base, and creates more local jobs.

Many of the non-profit and homecare workers live in low-income neighborhoods in San Francisco.

When these workers have more dollars in their pockets, they spend in local businesses.

The City contracts out to non-profit agencies to provide valuable services to the community. These non-profit workers care for the elderly and disabled, provide food and shelter to the homeless, mentor youth and provide counseling, legal services and health care to San Francisco residents.

The amendments include new

language that the City would make a commitment to budget adequate funding for non-profit organizations so that they can raise wages without laying off staff and cutting services.

If non-profits do not receive adequate funding, they have the protection of getting a waiver, unless they are large enough to be able to absorb the increased labor costs.

The criteria for the waiver is that the highest paid managerial position is not paid more than six times the wage of the lowest paid employee.

The cost of increasing funding to non-profits and a county agency for homecare workers is estimated around

\$20 million annually.

Supporters point out that it is a matter of political priorities for the City to come up with the money.

The City found \$16 million to renovate the Harding Park area for the World Golf Championship with Tiger Woods.

- Karl Kramer

Contact Your Supervisor

District 1 – Jake McGoldrick, 554-7410, 554-7415 (fax), Jake.McGoldrick@sfgov.org

District 2 – Michela Alioto-Pier, 554-7752, 554-7843 (fax), Michela.Alioto-Pier@sfgov.org

District 3 – Aaron Peskin, 554-7450, 554-7454 (fax), Aaron.Peskin@sfgov.org

District 4 – Fiona Ma, 554-7460, 554-7432 (fax), Fiona.Ma@sfgov.org

District 5 – Ross Mirkarimi, 554-7630, 554-7634 (fax), Ross.Mirkarimi@sfgov.org

District 6 – Chris Daly, 554-7970, 554-7974 (fax), Chris.Daly@sfgov.org

District 7 – Sean Elsbernd, 554-6516, 554-6546 (fax), Sean.Elsbernd@sfgov.org

District 8 – Bevan Dufty, 554-6968, 554-6909 (fax), Bevan.Dufty@sfgov.org

District 9 – Tom Ammiano, 554-5144, 554-6255 (fax), Tom.Ammiano@sfgov.org

District 10 – Sophie Maxwell, 554-7670, 554-7674 (fax), Sophie.Maxwell@sfgov.org

District 11 – Gerardo Sandoval, 554-6975, 554-6979 (fax), Gerardo.Sandoval@sfgov.org

Living Wage Coalition TV Show “It’s Time for a Living Wage”

3rd Sunday of each month
7:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Cable Channel 29

Please make phone calls and send letters, faxes and emails to Board President Aaron Peskin
City Hall, room 244
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102
Phone 554-7450
Fax 554-7454
Email Aaron.Peskin@sfgov.org

Mayor Gavin Newsom
City Hall, room 200
Phone 554-6141
Fax 554-6160
Email gavin.newsom@sfgov.org
urge them to support the Ammiano-McGoldrick Amendments to the Living Wage

Help Low-wage Workers by Donating Goods to the...

Community Thrift Store
623 Valencia
(between 17th & 18th Sts.)

donation door – south side of building on Sycamore Alley (one way from Mission to Valencia)

Donate in the name of the San Francisco Living Wage Coalition number 56
(on master list on door)
Open Every Day
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
receipts for tax deductions

“No Repair/Ready to Wear”
call 861-4910 with any questions on acceptable donations or to schedule donation pick up

The Struggle to Raise Wages Continues

While the majority of the Board of Supervisors support raising wages for more than 15,000 low-wage workers, Board President Aaron Peskin stalled them in committee.

At the April 5 Budget and Finance Committee meeting, Supervisor Aaron Peskin, who has been on the fence, sided with Supervisors Sean Elsbernd and Bevan Dufty in delaying a decision on the Ammiano/McGoldrick amendments to the living wage law.

These amendments will significantly raise wages for more than 15,000 low-wage workers: homecare workers, non-profit workers on city service contracts and airport workers.

Also, for the first time CalWORKS parents who work for a welfare grant will be included in the living wage law.

Supervisors Chris Daly and Ross Mirkarimi, who have both signed on as co-sponsors, wanted to send the amendments to the Board for a vote.

Supervisor Daly, chair of the committee, has put the amendments on hold until Supervisor Peskin changes his position.

Low-wage workers and their allies are organizing to budge Supervisor Peskin and move these amendments out of committee.

In addition, they are campaigning to get Mayor Gavin Newsom to

incorporate funding for the wage raises into the budget that he presents to the Board of Supervisors on June 1, as well as make sure that he signs the amendments into law after the Board passes them.

The key amendments are –

1. Parity for home care and non-profit workers with workers at for-profit companies that contract with the City.

Under current law, home care workers and non-profit workers are only required to be paid \$9 per hour instead of the \$10.77 per hour required for workers at for-profit businesses.

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Living Wage Coalition
522 Valencia St. #1
San Francisco, CA 94110



The Mobilizer is a publication of the San Francisco Living Wage Coalition.

Send articles and announcements for the next issue to the attention of *the Mobilizer*:

Living Wage Coalition
522 Valencia St. #1
San Francisco, CA 94110

phone (415) 513-5393
fax (415) 513-5392
or email sflivingwage@riseup.net

Hospital Workers Combat Workfare Program

A number of years back, San Francisco General Hospital started using workfare workers.

They did regular jobs as housekeepers, laundry workers, and warehouse workers alongside regular City workers, but had no union protections against unsafe working conditions or harassment, and they were paid only their welfare checks, about \$340 per month.

A number of us who were regular employees had given out various leaflets attacking workfare as unfair to General Assistance recipients. Having the work shifted to people on workfare also threatened City workers with layoffs.

Every day, the GA workers would come in and be given cheap flimsy paper stickers, the kind with the blue borders that say "Hello, my name is ..." with the date stamped on it.

It was humiliating. Here they were doing regular work at the hospital, which couldn't get along without them, because the hospital had laid off regular workers.

Yet all the workfare workers got were cheap, temporary, disposable, stickers.

The message was clear; these people were considered cheap, temporary, and disposable, as opposed to "regular" workers, often only feet away, who got permanent plastic badges.

A number of SF General workers discussed this, and wrote another leaflet about the corroding and weakening effects of alienating one group of workers from another and how this set up all workers for being temporary and disposable.

The leaflet also recalled the story of how many Gentiles in Nazi-

occupied Copenhagen had shown solidarity by wearing yellow stars along with Jews.

The leaflet then asked the reader, in the same spirit, to wear the attached blue sticker reading "Hello, my name is ... ABOLISH WORKFARE!"

We spent about two weeks taking the leaflets and stickers around to sympathetic co-workers, and on the appointed Monday, we put our stickers on and wore them most of the week, about 100 to 150 of us.

It was a great morale booster, sticker-wearers of both varieties gave each other high-fives in the corridor, and we got into some interesting conversations.

- Michael Lyon

Workfare Workers Included in Living Wage Law

The Board of Supervisors at their April 11 meeting passed the amendment introduced by Supervisors Jake McGoldrick and Tom Ammiano to have the number of work hours required to maintain eligibility for the county General Assistance (GA) grant and Personal Assisted Employment

Services (PAES) stipend based on the amount in the living wage law.

The inclusion of single adults in the county workfare program would treat with respect the work that they do - cleaning MUNI buses, sweeping streets and doing janitorial work at General Hospital. GA recipients

receive \$340 per month for 32 to 40 hours of work.

The amendment will decrease hours to 30 hours per month.

- Karl Kramer

Living Wage Coalition

522 Valencia St. #1, San Francisco, CA 94110

phone 415-513-5393, fax 415-513-5392, sflivingwage@riseup.net

____ Add my name endorsing the Living Wage campaign (indicate if organization for ID only)

____ Enclosed is a donation of \$_____. (Make out check to San Francisco Living Wage Coalition.

For a tax deductible donation of \$50 or more, make out check to SF Living Wage Coalition/Agape Foundation. We also accept tax deductible vehicle donations.)

____ I want to get involved. Please contact me.

____ I would like to become a member - \$25 for individuals, \$100 per year for organizations (includes a mail subscription to *the Mobilizer*).

Name _____ Title & Organization _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ (day) _____ (eve) Email _____

Moves to Expand Health Care

In the absence of a national commitment to universal health care, San Francisco is moving forward on several fronts to expand health care coverage for uninsured workers and residents:

- Supervisor Tom Ammiano has introduced legislation at the Board of Supervisors to provide coverage for some 40,000 workers employed in San Francisco.
- The San Francisco Health Department has completed a funding study for a health care plan for San Francisco's 5,000-plus taxi drivers.
- Mayor Gavin Newsom is seeking to expand health care coverage to all uninsured San Franciscans through a city-sponsored defined benefits program.
- The Board of Supervisors has passed amendments strengthening enforcement of the Health Care Accountability Ordinance (HCAO), which covers workers for companies that provide services under city contracts or lease city property.

The Ammiano-sponsored Worker Health Care Security Ordinance would require for-profit employers with 20 or more employees and non-profit employers with 50 or more employees to contribute toward employee health care services or provide reimbursement for health care expenses incurred by the employee, according to a formula contained in the ordinance. The legislation is currently pending before the Board's Budget & Finance Committee.

The taxi driver health plan has been in the works for several years. The funding study, which was released in mid-March, contemplates coverage through the San Francisco Health Plan, a city-sponsored insurer that provides coverage to more than 50,000 San Franciscans.

The taxi study explores a number of funding options designed to keep the plan affordable to cab drivers. In addition to driver contributions, other possible funding sources include cab companies, holders of taxicab permits

(medallions) and the taxi-riding public.

Mayor Newsom has endorsed the goal of covering uninsured San Francisco residents through a combination of government funding, employer contributions and user co-payments. He and Supervisor Ammiano have convened a 41-member group, the Universal Healthcare Council, to study the issue.

Chairing the group are Sandra Hernandez, Executive Director of the San Francisco Foundation, and Lloyd Dean, president and CEO of Catholic Healthcare West. The council is supposed to complete its study within 100 days and report its recommendations by mid-May.



art by Rini Templeton

The HCAO amendments increase the penalty paid by covered companies that do not provide health care for their workers from \$1.50 to \$2 per worker hour. They establish the Office of Labor Standards Enforcement (OLSE) as the agency responsible for enforcement of the ordinance and provide the OLSE with enhanced powers of investigation and enforcement. Insufficient enforcement has been a problem.

Supervisors Ammiano and Jake McGoldrick co-sponsored the HCAO amendments. Supervisor Fiona Ma added her name as a co-sponsor before final passage.

Dr. Mitch Katz, director of the Department of Public Health, attended a March 15 briefing on the release of the taxi study. He has called San Francisco's push to expand health care coverage to cab drivers and others "a model for other jurisdictions across the nation who also struggle with a large number of low income workers."

- Mark Gruberg

The San Francisco Living Wage Coalition

Who We Are

The Living Wage Coalition is a grassroots movement of low-wage workers and their allies fighting for economic justice. We believe that everyone who works full time should be able to survive on what they earn, without relying on public assistance or charity to support their families.

What We Do

We educate, organize and mobilize to demand that our tax dollars and use of public property do not go to businesses that pay poverty wages.

History

The Living Wage Coalition was initiated in 1998 by labor unions, community organizations and religious congregations to develop a movement led and democratically run by low-wage workers. As a result of a grass-roots campaign, San Francisco's living wage laws - called the Minimum Compensation Ordinance and the Health Care Accountability Ordinance - require that businesses with a service contract with the City or property lease at the Airport must pay workers at least \$10.77 per hour, provide 12 paid days off per year and provide health care coverage. In addition, businesses leasing other property from the City must provide health care coverage as a condition of their lease. By the City's estimates, more than 30,000 workers have benefited.

When We Meet

We meet the 2nd Wednesday of the month, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., at 2940 - 16th Street, room 204 (between Mission St. and South Van Ness Ave.). Everyone is welcome.

Coordinating Committee

Robert Bustamonte, Campaign Co-director; Karl Kramer, Campaign Co-director; Alice Rogoff, Recording Secretary; Phil Tryon, Treasurer; Bruce Allison, Yolanda Catalco, Manuel Chaffo, Mark Gruberg, Larry Lattimore, Guillermo Ponce de Leon, David Williams