



**Testimony: Favorable**  
Resolution CR-143-2020

Good evening Madam Chair, Vice-Chair and Members of the Howard County Council:

We cannot afford to live in a world, where others cannot even afford to live.

My name is Christopher Stevenson, and I serve as the Senior Policy Analyst with 1199SEIU- the largest healthcare workers union in the country. Our members are hospital and nursing home workers, but I'm here before you today to discuss all workers. Essential workers – including healthcare workers, sanitation workers, and grocery store workers, to name a few – are on the frontlines of the COVID19 pandemic, and most of them make under \$15/hour. These workers are facing life and death situations every day due to current COVID-19 working conditions, so it is at the very least incumbent upon us to remain steadfast to ensure, workers receive a livable wage.

An increase in minimum wage offers the opportunity to sustain a life where the concerns of today are not the concerns of tomorrow. It allows businesses to receive more consumer spending, increases the circulation of overall spending, and as history has shown, it has helped the United States recover from economic turmoil like the one we're in now. But for the worker, it allows families to keep their homes, which in nature, is the very make up to every family's security and foundation. For this reason, we support Resolution CR-143-2020,.

We must keep in mind that a increase in minimum wage is not a pre-COVID or post-COVID issue, this is a human life issue. All too often we find ourselves in situations where we're able to purchase amenities or essentials, despite if we truly need them or not. Most workers do not have that luxury. Workers deserve a raise that can bring about a life of meaning, of substance and dignity. The majority of workers who earn under \$15 an hour are women and People of Color, two categories of people that history has shown are constantly marginalized. By voting for this resolution, you are supporting a critical component needed to reduce gender and racial pay gaps.

Our healthcare heroes need a raise. The sanitation workers that pick up your trash need a raise. The teachers that guide our children's future need a raise. And the best way to thank them for their work is not to present them with an award or a proclamation, but to ensure they receive their fair share. For the sake of working families and business owners, please vote Yes on this Resolution and continue your support for the \$15/hour minimum wage. I thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,  
Christopher Stevenson  
MD/DC Sr. Policy Analyst  
1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East