

**Sayers, Margery**

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**From:** Joan Driessen <joan.driessen@acshoco.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 10, 2021 12:01 PM  
**To:** CouncilMail  
**Subject:** ACS Support for CB82-2021  
**Attachments:** CB 82\_11.15.2021.pdf

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Dear Council Members,

On behalf of the Association of Community Services (ACS) and our over 150 member organizations and community advocates, I urge you to vote in favor of CB 82, which accelerates the State-required minimum wage increases, and requires annual minimum wage increases and for the Council to meet to regularly evaluate the minimum wage. Within our [advocacy priorities](#), ACS supports efforts for everyone to have living wages to have a truly just standard of living in Howard County.

You will see in our [Self-Sufficiency Indicators Report](#) that it takes approximately \$75,000 per year, which is about \$36.06 per hour, for families to be self-sufficient and financially stable in Howard County. The [MD Center on Economic Policy's](#) (MDCEP) data reveals that a single adult who is not parenting needs to earn at least \$22.28 per hour, or around \$46,342 per year, in order to meet living wage requirements in the County. We fully recognize that the legislation's required minimum wage increases are not synonymous with the living wage needs *and* we support CB 82 because it is a step towards reaching living wages for each employee in Howard County.

In addition to wages being a matter of equity and social justice, wage requirements directly impact the nonprofit sector as both service providers and employers. So many people are working, and their wages are not high enough to take care of all of the necessities of life. For example, nearly 1 out of every 4 renter households in Howard County pay more than 50% of their income on rent, which does not leave much money for food, medicine, clothing, etc., because wages have not kept up with our cost of living. Nonprofits then see and face the direct impacts of low wages on the people we serve on a daily basis as we enroll people in benefits (e.g., SNAP, Medicaid, WIC, TCA) and provide emergency needs for food, clothing, housing, etc. Too often, nonprofit employees have such low wages that many also qualify for the very same benefits and services we provide for the clients we serve. We've got to work together to improve the lives of the clients we serve and people who work in nonprofits.

In truth, even as we support living wages, we must also recognize that increasing minimum wage requirements challenges nonprofits as employers. It is a struggle to pay living wages on nonprofits' budgets – particularly for small nonprofits. We face challenges in paying higher wages due to a variety of reasons, including but not limited to government-determined reimbursement rates for services being too low, grants and contracts with insufficient funding for the staffing required, and being required to operate under the presumption of scarcity. Our nonprofit workforce deserves wages that truly values the work we do. It will not help ease the staffing shortages and turnover we are facing when certified, licensed, and credentialed employees can earn more money in various for-profit entities doing less stressful work. Staffing shortages lead to decreased services and potentially closing our doors, which means our whole community loses out.

I would be remiss if I did not also mention the need for benefits (e.g., health insurance, retirement, life insurance) in the nonprofit sector since benefits and wages go hand in hand. With greater support for increasing the wage requirements, such as utilizing American Rescue Plan Act money to provide support for nonprofits to increase wages for employees, we also need to begin to address the deficit in benefits for nonprofit employees and the people we serve who earn

minimum wage. One example from an ACS member that does offer benefits illuminates this challenge. Winter Growth presently offers health insurance to any employee who works over 30 hours per week, and low wage workers can have health insurance for \$90/month premium with a \$1,500 annual deductible. As an employer, Winter Growth's pays an additional \$3.68/hour (or \$7,644 per year) per full-time employee to ensure access to health insurance. Without support for the minimum wage increases, they would face a real challenge around increasing wages and potentially offering less generous benefits. I am sure that many in the for-profit sector can relate to this difficulty.

While there are real concerns around the impacts of increasing minimum wage requirements to reach a living wage on employers, we wholeheartedly believe that we can work together to problem-solve around these challenges to meet the demands of justice and equity. Everyone benefits when we all earn enough to meet our needs. When we take steps to reach a living wage, we can shape a future where we will no longer have approximately 1 out of every 4 HCPSS students receiving Free and Reduced Priced Meals because their families will have enough money to cover their food expenses, for example, and people who work in Howard County can afford to live here too. We stand to lose more if we do not act now.

To reference the MDCEP again, this legislation will directly impact 40,000 people in Howard County, totaling a \$43 million increase in wages by 2026. 30% of working women, 33% of Black workers, 51% of Latinx workers, 25% of Asian and Pacific Islander workers, and 75% of workers in low-income families will benefit. Wage increases can draw more people into the labor market and since people with lower wages usually spend money on necessities, we stand to see a boost our local economy. The bottom line is that we can expand opportunities for people to earn living wages, keep our nonprofits and businesses open, and have a robust economy because it is not a zero-sum game.

Other counties have shown that they do not collapse when requiring increased wages coupled with government support for meeting those increases. Let's do that here in Howard County too so we can truly have a high quality of life for all residents. Now is the time to act. With that, we urge to vote favorably for CB 82 and commit to the additional advocacy and action that helps us all rise.

Thank you,

*Joan Driessen*

Joan Driessen  
Executive Director  
Association of Community Services of Howard County  
9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 301  
Columbia, MD 21046  
410-715-9545  
Direct: 443-518-7701







## **CB 82 – Minimum Wage Requirements**

**Position: Support**

**November 15, 2021**

On behalf of the Association of Community Services (ACS) and our over 150 member organizations and community advocates, I urge you to vote in favor of CB 82, which accelerates the State-required minimum wage increases, and requires annual minimum wage increases and for the Council to meet to regularly evaluate the minimum wage. Within our [advocacy priorities](#), ACS supports efforts for everyone to have living wages to have a truly just standard of living in Howard County.

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for nonprofits to increase wages for employees, we also need to begin to address the deficit in benefits for nonprofit employees and the people we serve who earn minimum wage. One example from an ACS member that does offer benefits illuminates this challenge. Winter Growth presently offers health insurance to any employee who works over 30 hours per week, and low wage workers can have health insurance for \$90/month premium with a \$1,500 annual deductible. As an employer, Winter Growth's pays an additional \$3.68/hour (or \$7,644 per year) per full-time employee to ensure access to health insurance. Without support for the minimum wage increases, they would face a real challenge around increasing wages and potentially offering less generous benefits. I am sure that many in the for-profit sector can relate to this difficulty.

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Other counties have shown that they do not collapse when requiring increased wages coupled with government support for meeting those increases. Let's do that here in Howard County too so we can truly have a high quality of life for all residents. Now is the time to act. With that, we urge to vote favorably for CB 82 and commit to the additional advocacy and action that helps us all rise.

Thank you,

*Joan Driessen*

Joan Driessen  
Executive Director



## Sayers, Margery

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**From:** Baker, Kevin  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 10, 2021 11:49 AM  
**To:** Sayers, Margery  
**Subject:** Fwd: proposed minimum wage

For Related Documents under CB82.

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

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**From:** Lynn Moore <lynn@larrilandfarm.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 10, 2021 11:47:05 AM  
**To:** Baker, Kevin <kebaker@howardcountymd.gov>  
**Subject:** proposed minimum wage

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Mr. Baker,

I am contacting you regarding the proposed Howard County Minimum Wage Legislation. As a business owner who employs primarily local youths, these proposals will have a major impact on our business. Due to the seasonal nature of our business, we employ primarily high school and college students. On average we employ 60+ students each season (5 – 6 months). About 45-50% are under age 18. Most of these students have no work experience. They must be taught how to work. They need very detailed instructions. They require a tremendous amount of supervision. It is unreasonable to pay them a 'living wage' as they are not experienced enough nor mature enough to justify the expense to the business.

I feel strongly that one of my services to the community is to train young people how to work: the importance of showing up for work on time, being ready to work when you arrive, how to communicate with others, how to be part of the work crew, the importance of performing the job to the satisfaction of the supervisor, what good customer service is, what tools are, how to use them, etc. Then they will be ready for the responsibility of a full time job. A lower wage for employees under age 18 would allow my business to justify the effort the training requires.

I encourage Howard County legislation to be in line with Maryland regulations. As a business owner it is very hard to keep up with the differences in regulations between different jurisdictions. I want to be in compliance with all regulations but it can be overwhelming especially when the same regulation varies between county, state and federal.

Sincerely,

Lynn Moore

Larriland Farm  
[lynn@larrilandfarm.com](mailto:lynn@larrilandfarm.com)  
(O) 410-489-7034  
[www.pickyourown.com](http://www.pickyourown.com) or [www.larrilandfarm.com](http://www.larrilandfarm.com)



## Sayers, Margery

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**From:** Amy Jackson <amyjack1@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 9, 2021 6:29 PM  
**To:** CouncilMail  
**Cc:** info@livingwagehoco.org  
**Subject:** Please pass CB82-2021 to raise the minimum wage in Howard County!

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Dear Howard County Council, I am writing to urge you to VOTE YES on CB82-2021 and raise the minimum wage in Howard County. I no longer work in Howard County, but moved to Montgomery to work as I make \$15/hour there doing the same work I was only making \$13 in HOCO.

Howard County is one of the wealthiest in the country, however, more than 1 in 4 households struggle to meet basic needs. Every person deserves the dignity of a paycheck that reflects the importance of their work and provides for their essential needs. Wages that fall well below the level needed to afford these basic living costs create additional barriers to employment and access to opportunities to achieve economic prosperity. Too many of our neighbors are struggling now, and cannot wait until the state-level mandate of a \$15/hour minimum wage fully takes effect as late as 2026. Other Maryland counties have already raised their minimum wage beyond the state-mandated minimum, and Howard County should follow suit. I urge you to pass CB82-2021 without delay, to provide essential support for Howard County residents and move Howard County closer to ensuring a living wage for all workers. Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely,

Sent from my iPhone





*Achieve with us.*

November 9, 2021

Dear County Council Members:

My name is Cindy Parr, and I wanted to supply additional written testimony to help articulate what I failed to voice to the degree necessary in my November 3, 2021, letter related to support of CB82-2021. As I stated in the November 3rd letter to County Council members, I wrote about the hardships disabilities providers are facing; the most significant being dire staffing shortages.

While our current world situation lends itself to creating a whole host of reasons for this issue, hourly wage is most definitely always on the list. Since I came to The Arc in July of 2015, we have been advocating every legislative session for increased funding to be able to pay our Direct Support Professionals a fair wage for the critical supports they provide people with disabilities. One would think it obvious that people who work in a field which requires a variety of certifications and annual refreshers, should receive a decent, living wage.

Year in and year out we advocate for people working in the disabilities field who need to be appropriately compensated. The hourly rate for their demanding work should never be less than a fast-food restaurant employee, retail clerk, or a line worker in a big box manufacturing company.

It is notable and appreciated that the Council recognizes the need to increase the hourly wage in Howard County. I feel the Council must also recognize their responsibility related to this proposed legislation so there are no unintended consequences for providers like The Arc of Howard County.

It is also worth noting that while we appreciate the inclusion of home and community-based services in the "small employer" category to ease the transition to the higher minimum wage levels, without adequate state and local funding, we will be unable to compete financially with large employers in the County for staff.

Direct support professionals must earn competitive wages for us to be able to hire enough staff to serve the people and families who rely on us. Most developmental disability providers are nonprofit organizations that rely on funding from the state and federal government. Unlike other businesses, DDA-licensed Medicaid providers are prohibited from passing on cost increases to the people they support. The unfunded employer mandate proposed by this legislation raises concerns for developmental disability providers, many of whom are already operating on thin margins due to a state reimbursement rate that hovers near minimum wage for direct support professionals.



*Achieve with us.*

If the County cannot supplement these increases in a meaningful way, it will create a financial hardship for our agency and many others. The proposed annual schedule of increases exceeds the state's minimum wage bill. Our agency, minus additional funding from the County, would struggle to support these scheduled increases outlined in CB82-2021.

I would ask that the Council please mark this letter as an addendum to my letter dated November 3, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carr", written in a cursive style.

Cindy Parr  
Executive Director



## Sayers, Margery

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**From:** Jackie Bryant <jebryant7@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 8, 2021 10:40 PM  
**To:** CouncilMail  
**Cc:** info@livingwagehoco.org  
**Subject:** Please pass CB82-2021 to raise the minimum wage in Howard County!

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Dear Howard County Council,

I am writing to urge you to VOTE YES on CB82-2021 and raise the minimum wage in Howard County.

Howard County is one of the wealthiest in the country, however, more than 1 in 4 households struggle to meet basic needs. Every person deserves the dignity of a paycheck that reflects the importance of their work and provides for their essential needs. Wages that fall well below the level needed to afford these basic living costs create additional barriers to employment and access to opportunities to achieve economic prosperity.

Too many of our neighbors are struggling now, and cannot wait until the state-level mandate of a \$15/hour minimum wage fully takes effect as late as 2026. Other Maryland counties have already raised their minimum wage beyond the state-mandated minimum, and Howard County should follow suit. I urge you to pass CB82-2021 without delay, to provide essential support for Howard County residents and move Howard County closer to ensuring a living wage for all workers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jackie Bryant

## Sayers, Margery

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**From:** Brittany Edwards <britt0423@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 8, 2021 9:02 PM  
**To:** CouncilMail  
**Cc:** info@livingwagehoco.org  
**Subject:** Please pass CB82-2021 to raise the minimum wage in Howard County!

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Dear Howard County Council,

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Sincerely,

Brittany M. Ambrose



## Sayers, Margery

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**From:** Annie Phillips <ipo70@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 8, 2021 5:24 PM  
**To:** CouncilMail  
**Cc:** info@livingwagehoco.org  
**Subject:** Please pass CB82-2021 to raise the minimum wage in Howard County!

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

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Sent from my iPhone

## Sayers, Margery

---

**From:** Annie Phillips <ipo70@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 8, 2021 5:23 PM  
**To:** CouncilMail  
**Cc:** info@livingwagehoco.org  
**Subject:** Please pass CB82-2021 to raise the minimum wage in Howard County!

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Dear Howard County Council, I am writing to urge you to VOTE YES on CB82-2021 and raise the minimum wage in Howard County. Howard County is one of the wealthiest in the country, however, more than 1 in 4 households struggle to meet basic needs. Every person deserves the dignity of a paycheck that reflects the importance of their work and provides for their essential needs. Wages that fall well below the level needed to afford these basic living costs create additional barriers to employment and access to opportunities to achieve economic prosperity. Too many of our neighbors are struggling now, and cannot wait until the state-level mandate of a \$15/hour minimum wage fully takes effect as late as 2026. Other Maryland counties have already raised their minimum wage beyond the state-mandated minimum, and Howard County should follow suit. I urge you to pass CB82-2021 without delay, to provide essential support for Howard County residents and move Howard County closer to ensuring a living wage for all workers. Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely,

Sent from my iPhone



## Sayers, Margery

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**From:** Anne M Brown <annembrown1@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 8, 2021 5:11 PM  
**To:** CouncilMail  
**Cc:** info@livingwagehoco.org  
**Subject:** Please pass CB82-2021 to raise the minimum wage in Howard County!

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Dear Howard County Council, I am writing to urge you to VOTE YES on CB82-2021 and raise the minimum wage in Howard County. Howard County is one of the wealthiest in the country, however, more than 1 in 4 households struggle to meet basic needs. Every person deserves the dignity of a paycheck that reflects the importance of their work and provides for their essential needs. Wages that fall well below the level needed to afford these basic living costs create additional barriers to employment and access to opportunities to achieve economic prosperity. Too many of our neighbors are struggling now, and cannot wait until the state-level mandate of a \$15/hour minimum wage fully takes effect as late as 2026. Other Maryland counties have already raised their minimum wage beyond the state-mandated minimum, and Howard County should follow suit. I urge you to pass CB82-2021 without delay, to provide essential support for Howard County residents and move Howard County closer to ensuring a living wage for all workers. Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely,

Anne M Brown  
10936 Rock Coast Road  
Columbia, MD 21044

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

## Sayers, Margery

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**From:** Ling liu <lsliu00@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 8, 2021 4:51 PM  
**To:** CouncilMail  
**Cc:** info@livingwagehoco.org  
**Subject:** Please pass CB82-2021 to raise the minimum wage in Howard County!

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

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## Sayers, Margery

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**From:** Cynthia Fikes <fikesfavors@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 7, 2021 7:13 PM  
**To:** CouncilMail  
**Cc:** info@livingwagehoco.org  
**Subject:** Please pass CB82-2021 to raise the minimum wage in Howard County!

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Dear Howard County Council,

I am Cynthia Fikes a long time Howard County resident, and President of the Columbia Democratic Club.

I am personally writing to urge you to VOTE YES on CB82-2021 and raise the minimum wage in Howard County.

Howard County is one of the wealthiest in the country, however, more than 1 in 4 households struggle to meet basic needs. Every person deserves the dignity of a paycheck that reflects the importance of their work and provides for their essential needs. Wages that fall well below the level needed to afford these basic living costs create additional barriers to employment and access to opportunities to achieve economic prosperity.

Too many of our neighbors are struggling now, and cannot wait until the state-level mandate of a \$15/hour minimum wage fully takes effect as late as 2026. Other Maryland counties have already raised their minimum wage beyond the state-mandated minimum, and Howard County should follow suit.

As a concerned citizen, I urge you to pass CB82-2021 without delay, to provide essential support for Howard County residents and move Howard County closer to ensuring a living wage for all workers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Fikes  
301-300-3970

Sent from my iPhone

## Sayers, Margery

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**From:** Rachel Eure <reure1@gulls.salisbury.edu>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 7, 2021 3:03 PM  
**To:** CouncilMail  
**Cc:** info@livingwagehoco.org  
**Subject:** Please pass CB82-2021 to raise the minimum wage in Howard County!

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Rachel Eure



## Sayers, Margery

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**From:** Eleanor Lee <eleanorklee1998@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 7, 2021 11:52 AM  
**To:** CouncilMail  
**Cc:** info@livingwagehoco.org  
**Subject:** Please pass CB82-2021 to raise the minimum wage in Howard County!

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Eleanor Lee  
7085 Copperwood Way Columbia MD, 21046

## Sayers, Margery

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**From:** Colleen Cotton <cmariecotton@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 7, 2021 7:13 AM  
**To:** CouncilMail  
**Cc:** info@livingwagehoco.org  
**Subject:** Please pass CB82-2021 to raise the minimum wage in Howard County!

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Sincerely,  
Colleen Cotton

Sent from my iPhone

## Sayers, Margery

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**From:** Scott Lee <scottmklee@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 6, 2021 5:40 PM  
**To:** CouncilMail  
**Cc:** info@livingwagehoco.org  
**Subject:** Please pass CB82-2021 to raise the minimum wage in Howard County!

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Dear Howard County Council, I am writing to urge you to VOTE YES on CB82-2021 and raise the minimum wage in Howard County. Howard County is one of the wealthiest in the country, however, more than 1 in 4 households struggle to meet basic needs. Every person deserves the dignity of a paycheck that reflects the importance of their work and provides for their essential needs. Wages that fall well below the level needed to afford these basic living costs create additional barriers to employment and access to opportunities to achieve economic prosperity. Too many of our neighbors are struggling now, and cannot wait until the state-level mandate of a \$15/hour minimum wage fully takes effect as late as 2026. Other Maryland counties have already raised their minimum wage beyond the state-mandated minimum, and Howard County should follow suit. I urge you to pass CB82-2021 without delay, to provide essential support for Howard County residents and move Howard County closer to ensuring a living wage for all workers. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Scott Lee

## Sayers, Margery

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**From:** Erik Allen Lee <erikallenlee@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 6, 2021 4:38 PM  
**To:** CouncilMail  
**Cc:** info@livingwagehoco.org  
**Subject:** Please pass CB82-2021 to raise the minimum wage in Howard County!

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Dear Howard County Council, I am writing to urge you to VOTE YES on CB82-2021 and raise the minimum wage in Howard County. Howard County is one of the wealthiest in the country, however, more than 1 in 4 households struggle to meet basic needs. Every person deserves the dignity of a paycheck that reflects the importance of their work and provides for their essential needs. Wages that fall well below the level needed to afford these basic living costs create additional barriers to employment and access to opportunities to achieve economic prosperity. Too many of our neighbors are struggling now, and cannot wait until the state-level mandate of a \$15/hour minimum wage fully takes effect as late as 2026. Other Maryland counties have already raised their minimum wage beyond the state-mandated minimum, and Howard County should follow suit. I urge you to pass CB82-2021 without delay, to provide essential support for Howard County residents and move Howard County closer to ensuring a living wage for all workers. Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely,

Erik Allen Lee,  
Columbia, Maryland



## Sayers, Margery

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**From:** Ethan <ethanklee2000@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 6, 2021 1:41 PM  
**To:** CouncilMail  
**Cc:** info@livingwagehoco.org  
**Subject:** Please pass CB82-2021 to raise the minimum wage in Howard County!

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Dear Howard County Council, I am writing to urge you to VOTE YES on CB82-2021 and raise the minimum wage in Howard County. Howard County is one of the wealthiest in the country, however, more than 1 in 4 households struggle to meet basic needs. Every person deserves the dignity of a paycheck that reflects the importance of their work and provides for their essential needs. Wages that fall well below the level needed to afford these basic living costs create additional barriers to employment and access to opportunities to achieve economic prosperity. Too many of our neighbors are struggling now, and cannot wait until the state-level mandate of a \$15/hour minimum wage fully takes effect as late as 2026. Other Maryland counties have already raised their minimum wage beyond the state-mandated minimum, and Howard County should follow suit. I urge you to pass CB82-2021 without delay, to provide essential support for Howard County residents and move Howard County closer to ensuring a living wage for all workers. Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely,

Ethan Lee  
11810 Snow Patch Way

## Sayers, Margery

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**From:** Mike Cox <mike@onceuponachildmaryland.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 4, 2021 5:43 PM  
**To:** CouncilMail  
**Cc:** Leonardo McClarty; Twele, Larry

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Greetings Howard County Council,

As a multi store business owner; retail business in Howard County and retail business in Anne Arundel county, this bill for min wage increase will only add another unnecessary burden to small business owners. The government does not realize they do not always have to "one up" other jurisdictions. State government has a law in place to increase min. wage to the \$15.00 per hour rate. If Howard county tries to enact their own version of this, it only complicates matters and muddies the water. Now, I will have employees in Anne Arundel County making less than employees in Howard County, a huge morale killer. Employees in the AA County store will now want to come and work in Howard County and this will hurt my already struggling employee base in AA County. Just leave it alone; COVID, rising costs, trouble hiring employees, can the government pump the brakes and let us small business owners catch our breath and try to survive.

Thank you, Mike

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Mike Cox  
Owner/Operator  
Once Upon A Child - Gambrills, Maryland  
Once Upon A Child - Ellicott City, Maryland

## Sayers, Margery

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**From:** Kim Estell <clarlennurseryinc@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 4, 2021 11:08 AM  
**To:** CouncilMail  
**Cc:** info@livingwagehoco.org  
**Subject:** Please pass CB82-2021 to raise the minimum wage in Howard County!

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Dear Howard County Council,

I am writing to urge you to VOTE YES on CB82-2021 and raise the minimum wage in Howard County. As a business owner myself, my budget process is rooted in the understanding that I would not have a business worth anything if I can't pay my employees what they are worth.

Howard County is one of the wealthiest in the country, and yet, more than 1 in 4 households struggle to meet basic needs. Every person deserves the dignity of a paycheck that reflects the importance of their work and provides for their essential needs. Wages that fall well below the level needed to afford these basic living costs create additional barriers to employment and access to opportunities to achieve economic prosperity. Too many of our neighbors are struggling now, and cannot wait until the state-level mandate of a \$15/hour minimum wage fully takes effect as late as 2026.

Other Maryland counties have already raised their minimum wage beyond the state-mandated minimum, and Howard County should follow suit. I urge you to pass CB82-2021 without delay, to provide essential support for Howard County residents and move Howard County closer to ensuring a living wage for all workers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Kimberly Estell  
Owner/Director, Clarlen Nursery Inc