
LIVING WAGE RESOLUTION A RESOLUTION OF WITNESS

Author: Rev. Brandon Duran
Sponsor: Justice & Witness Missional Team
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Summary

This living wage resolution is based on the belief that every person or family should be able to be financially self-sufficient and to modestly participate in the fullness of life that God envisions for all people.

Biblical and Theological Rationale

Deuteronomy 5:14

On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns, so that your male and female servants may rest, as you do.

Jeremiah 22:13

Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice; who makes his neighbors work for nothing and does not give them their wages.

Acts 11:29-30

The disciples determined that according to their ability, each would send relief to the believers living in Judea; this they did, sending it to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

Acts 2:44-45

All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.

As Christian brothers and sisters, we are called to have a different relationship with money than our capitalist society dictates. God's command of Sabbath ensured a balance in life and equality in society. Sabbath created a pause that put a halt to predatory practices and endless accumulation. The prophet Jeremiah warned against avarice and the abuses that correspond with endless consumption. The Book of Acts highlights the way the early Church set for us an example of a different relationship with money. By everyone giving what they could and giving to those who were most in need, they ensured that everyone

had enough. This individual accountability to each other is based on the belief that we are all children of God, deserving of justice and capable of acting justly.

Economic fairness at the systemic level is built into the ethics of our faith traditions as well. In Hebrew tradition, debts were forgiven, and slaves were set free every seven years (Deuteronomy 15). In the year of Jubilee, which came every 50 years, all the land was equitably re-distributed. This radical re-structuring of a society prevents against the accumulation of enormous wealth based on the understanding that the land and the people ultimately belong to God.

Resolution

WHEREAS, economic inequality in the United States inflames tensions in our country and is degrading the health, democracy, and economic prosperity of our nation; and,

WHEREAS, wages in the United States have not kept pace with rates of productivity or inflation, decreasing the ability of individuals or families to be able to buy the essentials; and,

WHEREAS, workers in low-wage jobs are disproportionately women and immigrants thereby exacerbating bias these historically oppressed communities already face; and,

WHEREAS, we see the way that congregations are working tirelessly to fill this ever-growing gap between what people need to survive and what they can provide for themselves, even while working; and

WHEREAS, our Christian teachings call us to address the economic and political systems that drive people into homelessness and poverty, in addition to meeting urgent need; and

WHEREAS, political leaders in Hawai'i state have recognized the need to increase the minimum wage in order to address the economic disparity between income and the cost of living in Hawai'i; and

WHEREAS, the Justice and Witness Missional Team has previously advocated for a livable wage and economic justice in its November 2018 Statement of Support for Hawai'i Marriott and Kyo-ya Hotels and Resorts Employees; and

WHEREAS, the concept of a living wage is more than just a specific hourly figure but also includes benefits and compensation that create opportunities for individuals to lead healthy and balanced lives. This includes, but is not limited to, affordable access to basic human necessities that strengthen households and families such as the ability to:

- Wake up in a safe, affordable home.
- Cook a healthful meal without worrying about where the next meal is coming from.

- Access to efficient transit options, including public transit.
- Take their children to a quality daycare or school.
- Go to a job where they are respected, safe and valued.
- Enjoy good working conditions and have a voice on the job, including the right to organize.
- Visit the doctor without worrying about how to pay for it.
- Have adequate time to spend with family, rest for renewal, and participate in community life.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Hawai'i Conference of the United Church of Christ encourage all faithful disciples of Jesus to educate ourselves from a faith-based perspective within our local church setting about a holistic living wage, the effects of moving toward a holistic living wage, and the issue of income inequality; and, engage in the issues by prayerfully listening to minimum wage workers and their families share about their struggles, hopes, and needs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Hawai'i Conference UCC call on each of the local churches to consider partnering with one another or with other organizations such as the Raise Up Hawai'i Coalition to take positive steps in fleshing out a holistic living wage.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Hawai'i Conference UCC at its various settings consider advocating for justice in the form of a holistic living wage for all with elected representatives and business leaders.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Hawai'i Conference UCC, through the Conference Council, the Justice and Witness Missional Team, and other related ministries at this setting, with the support of the Conference Minister and staff:

1. Facilitate opportunities for education, dialogue, and advocacy;
2. Be a resource for local churches and associations seeking to engage in this issue;
3. And, report to the 198th 'Aha Pae'āina in 2020 as to the progress of this resolution throughout the year.

SUGGESTED TEAM FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Council of the Hawai'i Conference UCC