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Montgomery County Council Bill 12-16 – Human Rights and Civil Liberties – County Minimum Wage – Amount – Annual Adjustment October 18, 2016 SUPPORT

On behalf of the Board of the Woman's Democratic Club of Montgomery County, I write to strongly support Montgomery County Bill 12-16, that will increase the minimum wage to \$15/hour.

Bill 12-16 would:

- Increase the County minimum wage to \$15 per hour, effective July 2020.
- Provide for incremental increases to \$12.50 in 2018, and \$13.75 in 2019.
- Require beginning in 2021, annual adjustments in the minimum wage by the average annual increase, if any, in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the previous calendar year.

WDC strongly encourages the Council to include tipped workers in this bill. Tipped workers – especially at more moderately priced restaurants – are disproportionately women and minorities.

WDC also strongly encourages the County to increase its contributions for nonprofit organizations when federal and state reimbursements do not cover their increased labor costs.

WDC joins with the many labor unions, workers rights groups, and nonprofit agencies that are supporting this bill. The \$15 minimum wage is also a core tenet of the 2016 Democratic Party Platform.

There is also a [growing workers movement](#) across the country to raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour. A [number of businesses are already raising their minimum wage](#) as a result (including McDonalds, Walmart, Starbucks, Whole Foods, and Ikea). From this we have seen a growing body of evidence that suggests that providing a living wage makes good economic sense for businesses by creating a more committed and productive work force, as well as improved customer satisfaction.

Although average wages have increased in Montgomery County in the past year, the largest increase has been for high wage earners. No one who works full time should have to raise a family in poverty. Even with this

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OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

increase, the annual income will be \$31,200 while the Montgomery County self-sufficiency standard for a family of four is \$89,926.

This increase would provide the most benefit to working adults (51% of low wage workers), and women (highly concentrated in low-wage health care and personal support occupations).

Increasing the minimum wage would reduce the dependence of low-wage workers on the County's social safety net programs.

The Woman's Democratic Club strongly encourages Montgomery County to join Washington DC, Seattle, San Francisco, California, New York State, and other jurisdictions across the country in providing for a \$15 minimum wage.

Sincerely,



Linda B. Kolko
President

We ask your support for Council Bill 12-16 and strongly encourage passage of this critical measure. Thank you.