



The Montgomery County Green Party supports Bill 28-17. The Green Party advocates policies to empower all workers, increase their bargaining power, and raise their standard of living. No one should be living in poverty or struggle to afford basic necessities in 2017. To that end, the Green Party advocates for a universal basic income, a guaranteed job, and a living wage, so that everyone lives and works with dignity and with freedom. While this bill only raises the minimum wage, this is a step in the right direction to increase the power of workers and we urge you to vote in favor of this bill.

However, we want to emphasize that this is not enough for the Greens. If implemented in full tomorrow, this would not provide our poorest workers a living wage. Dr. Amy Glasmeier of MIT has calculated that currently, today, a \$16 minimum wage in Montgomery County accounts only for the basic needs of a family, but it doesn't budget for entertainment or allocate for unpaid vacations or holidays. It also doesn't allocate for retirement savings or the purchase of capital assets like a home.¹ She states that "In light of this fact, [this wage level], is perhaps better defined as a minimum subsistence wage."² And if a \$15 minimum wage fails to provide a living wage for our workers today, it will definitely fail to provide a living wage for them three years from now, and five years from now, as inflation and higher costs of living erode the purchasing power won by this bill. The benefits of this bill will also roll out relatively slowly for workers across the county, as 89% of businesses will be eligible for the slower phase-in by 2022, five years from now.³

Despite these deficiencies, the benefits of this bill will be substantial. The County Executive's commissioned report concluded that increased wages were associated with decreased stress for workers and their families, as well as improved mental health.⁴ It has been estimated that 80,000 workers were impacted by the previous minimum wage bill, and the National Employment Law Project estimated that up to 100,000 workers could be affected by the current minimum wage bill.⁵

¹ <http://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/24031>

² <http://livingwage.mit.edu/resources/Living-Wage-User-Guide-and-Technical-Notes-2016.pdf>

³ See page 107-108 of the PFM Group Report, https://www.scribd.com/document/355342762/Moco-Minimum-Wage#from_embed

⁴ See page 7 of the PFM Group Report, https://www.scribd.com/document/355342762/Moco-Minimum-Wage#from_embed

⁵ From their analysis of BLS statistics on page 2, <http://www.nelp.org/content/uploads/Fact-Sheet-Impact-of-15-Minimum-Wage-Montgomery-MD.pdf>

The Montgomery County Green Party desires better for this County. According to the Census Bureau the median household income is \$99,000, which would place this county as one of the top 10 wealthiest counties in the country.⁶ If we decide we cannot afford to take care of our poorest workers, and that a certain level of poverty and precariousness is acceptable for us, other counties may not even try for a \$15 minimum wage, let alone a living wage. While the Montgomery County Green Party has reservations about this bill, this is a step forward to the day when the poorest members of our community can live their lives to the fullest and with security just as our most wealthy members already do. We urge you to vote in favor of Bill 28-17.

⁶ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/montgomerycountymaryland,baltimorecitymaryland,US/IPE120216>