



Hosting a Signature Sabbath Overview Sheet

Thank you for your prophetic support of families here in Massachusetts. We are excited that your congregation is planning towards a Signature Sabbath. This fall, over 50 congregations are standing up for the dignity of our families through gathering signatures to increase the minimum wage and secure sick time for all fulltime workers. These critical issues have stalled in the Legislature and we are seeking to put them on the 2014 ballot.

Our goal is for congregations to collect 30,000 signatures. Many of these congregations are leading a Signature Sabbath the first weekend in October, but anytime before November 20th can work. We are part of the “Raise Up Massachusetts” coalition of faith organizations, unions, and community groups. This is a first step in a larger fight for greater economic opportunities for all families.

You will find the following information in the packet to support you in your justice ministry and Signature Sabbath:

1. Invitation letter from Rev. Jane Gould and Rev. Don Mier of Massachusetts Communities Action Network
2. Sacred Text Excerpts on Wages
3. Sample Sermon and Preaching Notes
4. Sample Announcement
5. Overview of “Raise Up Massachusetts” Campaign to Increase the Minimum Wage and Secure Earned Sick Time
6. Impact of Raising the Minimum Wage By City/Region
7. Frequently Asked Questions
8. Signature Sabbath Planning Sheet
9. Short Training for Signature Gatherers Connected with a Worship Service
10. Signature Forms
11. Yes, Congregations Can Support Signature Gathering on Ballot Measures: Guidelines for 501(c)(3) Congregations

Massachusetts Faith Voices



Dear Clergy Colleague,

As Jeremiah (22:13) said "*Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice, making his countrymen work for nothing, not paying them for their labor.*"

We believe that everyone is made in God's image and likeness and therefore all people should be treated with dignity. Unfortunately, this is not the case for millions of Massachusetts workers who toil hard every day and yet do not earn enough to care for themselves and their families. The recent economic downturn has only made this situation worse. Two out of three jobs lost during the recession were good-paying middle-income jobs, while two out of three jobs gained since the end of the recession pay low-wages. In many of our cities and towns, more than one-quarter of the jobs available pay the minimum wage or just above. I'm sure many of you have heard the difficulties faced by your people in these times and have seen its impact on your congregations.

Our faith calls us to act to alleviate the pain of our people and heal our communities. That's why many in the faith community have taken up a prophetic call to return some dignity to our people. Congregational members of MA Communities Action Network and MA Faith Voices— a network of faith-based organizations working for economic justice – are working to “Raise Up Massachusetts”, and set an example for the nation of how we should treat “the least of these”, by making the state minimum wage the strongest in the country and by giving full-time employees access to earned sick time.

We are excited that you are joining us in this endeavor. In this packet you will find supporting materials to host a Signature Sabbath in your congregation. Across the state dozens of congregations are hosting these events on the first weekend in October, or on a weekend that fits their congregational schedule. We are grateful for your partnership in this ministry.

If you have any questions, please call Lew Finfer at 617-470-2912.

Many Blessings,

Rev. Jane Gould and Rev. Don Mier

Massachusetts Communities Action Network (www.mcan-pico.org), a member of PICO National Network

Sacred Text Excerpts on Wages

Romans 4:4

Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due.

Isaiah 65:23

They will not toil in vain or raise children to be destroyed, for they are the seed blessed by Adonai; and their offspring with them.

Jeremiah 22:13

Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice, who makes his neighbor serve him for nothing and does not give him his wages.

Leviticus 19:13

You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired servant shall not remain with you all night until the morning.

Colossians 4:1

Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

James 5:4

Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.

Luke 10:7

And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house.

Matthew 20:1-15

For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and to them he said, 'You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. ...

Matthew 10:10

No bag for your journey, nor two tunics nor sandals nor a staff, for the laborer deserves his food.

Luke 12:48

But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.

Matthew 6:24

No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

Theological Framework for MCAN Focus on Increasing Wages

By Rev. Carlos D. Suarez, Tri Parish Catholic Church, in Brockton

Good evening! It's a great joy to be here with you this evening as you begin your time of retreat and reflection on the mission and the causes that are before you. I was asked this evening to speak on the religious imperative for the vision that will be discussed this weekend. This evening is a bit of preaching to the choir, or preaching to the converted, perhaps even a bit of preaching to the preachers.

It is good that we come together to do a bit of that, to stir each other up by recalling and reframing our shared vision, but lest this simply become an echo chamber with the same thought thrown around in a variety of shades. It's important that we also take a moment to step outside of ourselves to reflect on how we came to be at this moment.

We gather to be a prophetic voice to a world whose ears have often grown deaf to words of invitation and prophecy. At times, we may feel inadequate as prophets as though we do not have the necessary talents or education, or perhaps the necessary astuteness on how to frame our words that they may be heard. At those moments, we would do well to remember the words that God spoke to the prophet Jeremiah at the beginning of his prophetic career:

**The word of the LORD came to me:
Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
before you were born I dedicated you,
a prophet to the nations I appointed you.
“Ah, Lord GOD!” I said,
“I do not know how to speak. I am too young!”^{*}
But the LORD answered me,
Do not say, “I am too young.”
To whomever I send you, you shall go;
whatever I command you, you shall speak.
Do not be afraid of them,
for I am with you to deliver you—oracle of the LORD.
Then the LORD extended his hand and touched my mouth, saying to me,
See, I place my words in your mouth!
Today I appoint you
over nations and over kingdoms,
To uproot and to tear down,
to destroy and to demolish,
to build and to plant.¹**

In the call of the prophet Jeremiah, we see two things. First of all we see the call of the prophet which is echoed in our own lives and our own hearts as God stirs us from our complacency and from our sense of limitation and moves us to be the instruments by which His message goes forth. It does not matter if we are too young or too old, if we have gone to the right

¹ NAB, Jeremiah 1:4-10

schools, or if we do not have enough formal education. If the Lord has placed a message in our hearts, then the Lord will give us the means and make us the instruments by which that message will be proclaimed.

The second point that is highlighted in this passage from the prophet Jeremiah is at the core of this gathering, and that is the dignity of every human life. God reminds us through His words to the prophet Jeremiah that every life has dignity and value and furthermore that He has known every life from all eternity. Therefore, when we take a stance that upholds and proclaims the dignity of human life, we cooperate in God's divine plan. I spoke of us being used as instruments, and I need to make a distinction. God can use us as instruments in the unfolding of His will, because He created us, and because He would never use us in a way that is below our dignity. However, this does not give us license to instrumentalize or objectivize each other. As we have heard in the working mission statement, "In our current market society, people are treated as dispensable. Little consideration is given to their personal or familial needs. As people of faith, we want to raise up the value and dignity of each person (and strengthen a call for basic human rights)."² We gather tonight as prophets, and we gather as children of a loving God, imbued with worth and dignity by our creator. It is our mission to discern how to let this dignity flow out into the world around us.

We must begin by rediscovering our own journey. How did we come to be at this moment? What was it that touched our lives to bring us here today? Our paths are as varied as the paths of the prophets that God has sent throughout time to His chosen people. For some of us it may even have required a jolt out of our complacency before we could hear or understand the mission that our Lord was inviting us to undertake. Therefore, I invite you over the next few days, and certainly as you go forth, to make time regularly to ponder the path your life has taken and to discover the ways by which you have been brought to this moment. As we discover those moments not only will we discover a greater appreciation for the dignity and wonder in which we have been created. We will also find a renewed vigor and urgency for the prophetic message which has been entrusted to us.

The two missions that you've chosen to embrace, a campaign for a just wage and a campaign for a reform or a reconstruction of a broken immigration system are both aspects of the greater mission of giving voice to the voiceless and promoting human dignity. Our mission is not only to reframe the discussion and to reclaim the language, to speak of human beings instead of commodities or aliens; our mission is also to reshape human minds and hearts. Pope John Paul II wrote in *Centessimus Annus*, "Justice will never be fully attained unless people see in the poor person, who is asking for help in order to survive, not an annoyance or a burden, but an opportunity for showing kindness and a chance for greater enrichment."³

The call for a just wage as much as the call for a just system of immigration finds its origin in the heart of God, and its justification in the scriptures as well as in the experience of the people of faith. Time and again the scriptures remind us of the importance of welcoming the stranger and taking care of the poor. The prophet Zechariah writes, "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

² Proposed BIC working statement

³ *Centessimus Annus*. Paragraph 58. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centessimus-annus_en.html

Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy each to his brother, do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor; and let none of you devise evil against his brother in your heart.”⁴ Saint Paul in his letter to the Hebrews puts it in a different light when he writes, “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”⁵ This passage reminds us that it’s not only is it a matter of justice that we treat our brothers and sisters with equality and dignity. To treat our brothers and sisters with dignity is also an expression of our love for God.

As people of faith then we have an obligation to speak up in the light of this injustice. Those of us who are comfortable, who are at least making ends meet, and who perhaps are even flourishing, are responsible to give voice to our brothers and sisters who have not. Pope Benedict XVI in his encyclical letter on Integral Human Development in Charity and Truth, *Caritas in Veritate*, reminded us that, “In many cases, poverty results from a violation of the dignity of human work, either because work opportunities are limited (through unemployment or underemployment), or ‘because a low value is put on work and the rights that flow from it, especially the right to a just wage and to the personal security of the worker and his or her family’”⁶

Paying a just wage is not an option then, it is an imperative. For those of you that may not be familiar with it, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* is a book which takes the scriptures and traditions of the Church and applies them the myriad issues which face the humanity. The Catechism tells us that:

“a just wage is the legitimate fruit of work” (2434). a just wage is not that which will merely provide sufficient food, clothing, and shelter. To live at a subsistence level is to live at the minimum condition of human dignity, and, as St. Thomas Aquinas wrote in the *Summa Theologica*, “No one is obliged to live unbecomingly.”

A just wage, then, should provide a worker with enough to live, and perhaps a little more, so as to enable him to live “becomingly.” The Church has, therefore, always desired that the worker not remain trapped at a subsistence level, but be able to better his condition: The degree of independence the worker gains by doing so increases his dignity, which is part and parcel of living becomingly.

Pope John Paul II went further. In the document, *Laborem exercens, On Human Work* (1981) he wrote that payment of living wages was a critical criterion for determining the legitimacy of the entire economic system: Hence in every case a just wage is the concrete means of verifying the whole socioeconomic system and, in any case, of checking that it is functioning justly.

⁴ NAB. Zechariah 7:9-10

⁵ RSV. Hebrews 13:2.

⁶ Benedict XVI. *Caritas in Veritate*. Paragraph 63.

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate_en.html

Work is a good thing. It's the means by which each person participates in the building up of the human community. As Pope Francis recently remarked: “[w]ork, to use a metaphor, ‘anoints’ us with dignity, fills us with dignity, makes us similar to God, who has worked and still works, who always acts; it gives one the ability to maintain oneself, one’s family, to contribute to the growth of one’s own nation.”⁷ We see then even more clearly the error of allowing this system to remain which denies human dignity, which denies human flourishing and which takes divinely created persons and attempts to degrade them to being mere cogs in a machine.

What of the migrant? Well that part of our mission is no less urgent. As the Catholic bishops of the US wrote in a letter some years ago, “The new immigrants call most of us back to our ancestral heritage as descendants of immigrants and to our baptismal heritage as members of the body of Christ.”⁸ There has been much success in poisoning the conversation by changing the language, speaking of aliens instead of immigrants speaking of persons that are illegal rather than actions that are illegal. We need to reclaim the language and refocus the dialogue on the injustice of a broken immigration system, more than that on the injustice of a global economic system that is so broken that it forces people to take desperate measures, to leave their homelands and to try to make at least a basic living in a new land. As Bishop Thomas Wenski, now the Archbishop of Miami noted when he was bishop of Orlando, “The so-called illegals are so not because they wish to defy the law; but, because the law does not provide them with any channels to regularize their status in our country which needs their labor: they are not breaking the law, the law is breaking them.”⁹

Each of us has our story about how we came to be here in this country as individuals and as families. Some stories stretch back for generations other started a few years ago. My parents came from Colombia, my dad in his late teen years, my mom in her early twenties. They followed the process of immigration and settled. They enlisted in the army as a way of paying back to this country for the opportunities they had been given and as a means of furthering themselves as citizens giving back to their nation. Some would hear this story and say, “well your parents did as they were supposed to do, and they’ve reaped the benefits.” That’s certainly true, but that doesn’t absolve me, of being mindful of the needs, the rights and the dignity of those who had they been given the opportunity would have come here legal, but lacking that opportunity who chose to come here by any means because the stark alternative is often starvation, suffering, and death.

Yes, a country has the right to strengthen its borders and to place demands upon those that live in its lands, but it cannot do so while ignoring the realities that cause the problems in the first place.

The problem today my brothers and sisters is that in the face of the problems in our country and our world we’ve become engaged in conversations about systems, economics and production. In all this talk, we have forgotten the most important part, the human beings, who are

⁷ Pope Francis. General Audience. May 1, 2013. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/audiences/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130501_udienza-generale_en.html

⁸ . USCCB. *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity, A Statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops*. 2000. <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/pastoral-care-of-migrants-refugees-and-travelers/resources/welcoming-the-stranger-among-us-unity-in-diversity.cfm>

⁹ Most Reverend Thomas Wenski, Bishop of Orlando, *Column U.S. immigration policy outdated and unjust toward working Immigrants*, May 13, 2005

meant to be the ones that enjoy the fruits of these systems, but who far too often have become cogs that merely perpetuate a rapidly degrading and failing system.

All of us, regardless of color or creed, belong to one family through our shared humanity. Instead of safeguarding systems, we need to focus on what truly matters. As Pope Benedict XVI stated, “the primary capital to be safeguarded and valued is man, the human person in his or her integrity: ‘Man is the source, the focus and the aim of all economic and social life’”¹⁰ We need to reframe our conversation in such a way that the dignity and rights of human persons are highlighted. We need to create a conversation where the story that is told is not of what separates us but rather about what unites us. We must highlight our basic humanity and the dignity which is given to each of us by our loving God who put each of us on this earth with a mission and a goal, who gave us life that it may flourish, and who gave us the desire for happiness and for peace.

So, what must all of us who are gathered here do? First of all we must give thanks for the blessings which have been bestowed upon us. We must cherish the gift of our life and use it wisely and well. Second, we must embrace our prophetic duty to speak up for the injustices in the world around us. As the Book of Proverbs says, “Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.”¹¹ It may seem like we take small steps and they do not bear fruit. We may feel tempted to give into discouragement and to give up. However, we must keep firmly on our task, because as people of faith we must remember that the task we undertake is not our own. Our mission for justice is a participation in God’s design and desire for the unfolding of this life and of this world, which He has given us.

May your work be fruitful and recognizing the gifts you have been given and the gifts that you are may each of you do your part to make justice and peace a reality not only in your lives, but especially in the lives of those that most desire it and yet can least claim it for themselves.

¹⁰ Benedict XVI. *Caritas in Veritate*. Paragraph #25

¹¹ NAB. Proverbs 31:8-9

THEOLOGICAL THOUGHTS FOR TEACHING AND PREACHING INCREASING THE MINIMUM WAGE AND GETTING EARNED SICK TIME

Written by Rev. Jane Gould, Rector at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Lynn

Through MA Faith Voices, we work together this fall to defend the dignity of some of the poorest and most vulnerable residents of our Commonwealth. Increasing and indexing the minimum wage, and gaining paid sick days for full-time workers would make a difference in the lives of low-wage workers and their families.

Made in the image and likeness of God, our Biblical witness challenges us to protect the dignity of every human being as we are all beloved children of God. And Scripture stands particularly firm on the necessity of protecting the rights of the poor and needy. There is no doubt that God calls us seek justice for those who are oppressed.

The success of MA Faith Voices in the Raise Up Massachusetts Campaign depends on clergy boldly claiming our preaching and teaching role. Motivating our people to collect 200,000 signatures requires us to connect the political petition campaign to our faith. In asking people to sign the petition or collect signatures in their community, we want them to understand that each signature is a small stitch in our work of repairing the world.

Preaching and teaching take on different forms in our various faith communities. And, the internet and our own denominational teachings offer a host of resources for setting a theological context for defending the rights of workers and advocating for the poorest and most vulnerable among us. The ideas and scripture passages offered here are simply tools that some may want to use.

Obviously, we start with Genesis and our creation in the image and likeness of God. Torah makes clear that economic inequality betrays God's plan (Dt. 15) and specifically that low-wage workers warrant protection: "*Do not take advantage of a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether that worker is a fellow Israelite or a foreigner residing in one of your towns.*"¹⁵ *Pay them their wages each day before sunset, because they are poor and are counting on it. Otherwise they may cry to the LORD against you, and you will be guilty of sin.*" (Dt. 24:14-15) Leviticus 19.13 insists that hired servants must be paid in a timely way.

Throughout Proverbs, our teachings instruct us to "*defend the rights of the poor and needy.*" (Prov. 31:9) The teacher also warns "*One who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth and one who gives gifts to the rich—both come to poverty*" (Prov. 22:16).

The prophets consistently challenge God's people to respect the dignity of all people, and most especially to protect those who are poor. For the core of the prophetic message, we look to Isaiah 58 and the feast of justice that the Lord requires, Amos 5:24 demanding that we let justice roll like a river, and Micah declaring, "*He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*" (Mic. 6.8)

More specifically for the Raise Up Massachusetts Campaign, Jeremiah proclaims: “*Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice, making his own people work for nothing, not paying them for their labor.*” (Jer. 22:13) Likewise, Malachai warns against cheating workers: “*So I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me,*” says the LORD Almighty.” (Mal. 3:5) And Amos warns: “*Hear this, you who trample the needy and do away with the poor of the land, saying, ‘When will the New Moon be over that we may sell grain, and the Sabbath be ended that we may market wheat?’—skimping on the measure, boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales, buying the poor with silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, selling even the sweepings with the wheat.*” (Amos 8:4-6)

In Christian Scripture, obviously Jesus claiming as his ministry the fulfillment of Isaiah 61 sets the context for advocacy and action: “*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.*” Matthew and Luke both warn that we cannot serve God and money; and Jesus makes abundantly clear that wealth often gets in the way of those who seek the kingdom. For those using the Revised Common Lectionary, the September 29 Gospel tells Luke’s story of Lazarus at the gate. Surely, the text offers an opportunity to make clear that “walking by” poverty and injustice while failing to respond with compassion is contrary to God’s desire for us. Luke and later Timothy make clear that “*the worker deserves his wages.*” (Lk. 10:7 & 1 Tim. 5:8) And the apostle Paul instructs the Romans: “*Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation.*”

Few calls to public action offer clergy such a wealth of resources for preaching and teaching. The resources offered here are not meant to be exhaustive and we certainly have among us far more astute theologians and Biblical scholars than those who have assembled these ideas and texts. What matters is that we teach and preach boldly motivating our people to live their faith as we seek to repair the world one stitch at a time. And, in the weeks and months ahead, please forward to MA Faith Voices any and all preaching and teaching materials you find useful. In the Raise Up Massachusetts Campaign, we stand with the poorest and most vulnerable in our Commonwealth. Increasing and indexing the minimum wage, and gaining paid sick days for full-time workers would make a difference in the lives of low-wage workers and their families. Together, let us repair the world.



Sample Verbal or Bulletin Announcement:

Romans 4:4 “Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due.”

We believe that everyone is made in God’s image and likeness and therefore all people should be treated with dignity. Unfortunately, this is not the case for millions of Massachusetts workers who toil hard every day and yet do not earn enough to care for themselves and their families. Across the state people of faith are standing up for the dignity of families and hosting Signature Sabbaths. We encourage you to prayerfully consider signing a petition to put onto the Massachusetts ballot an increase in the minimum wage from \$8-10.50 to be phased in over time, and secure earned sick time for all full time Massachusetts workers.



RAISE UP FAMILIES, RAISE UP MASSACHUSETTS

"Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice, making his countrymen work for nothing, not paying them for their labor." Jeremiah 22:13

People of faith are standing up for the dignity of families. In our land of abundance, too many hard working people are struggling to make ends meet. Raise Up Massachusetts is fighting to raise the minimum wage and require employers to offer earned sick time to all full time workers.

EARNED SICK TIME

For nearly 1 million workers in Massachusetts, staying home to care for themselves or a sick child could mean losing their job. The ability for workers to care and provide for themselves and family members is a right, not a privilege, and now is the time to make it a reality for working families.

Raise Up Massachusetts is fighting to ensure earned sick time for workers across the state. Under our proposal, workers would be able to earn one hour of sick time for every 30 hours worked, up to 40 hours a year, so that they don't have to risk losing their jobs to care for themselves or their families.

Earned sick time is also good for business. Job retention policies like earned sick time reduce unemployment and strengthen the economy. When workers are able to earn sick time, it decreases employee turnover, limits the spread of illness at the workplace, and maximizes productivity.

RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE

The minimum wage in Massachusetts has been stuck at \$8 an hour since 2008, yet costs keep rising – and workers are long overdue for a raise. Families can't afford the basic necessities, and it's an everyday struggle to put food on the table and keep a roof over their heads.

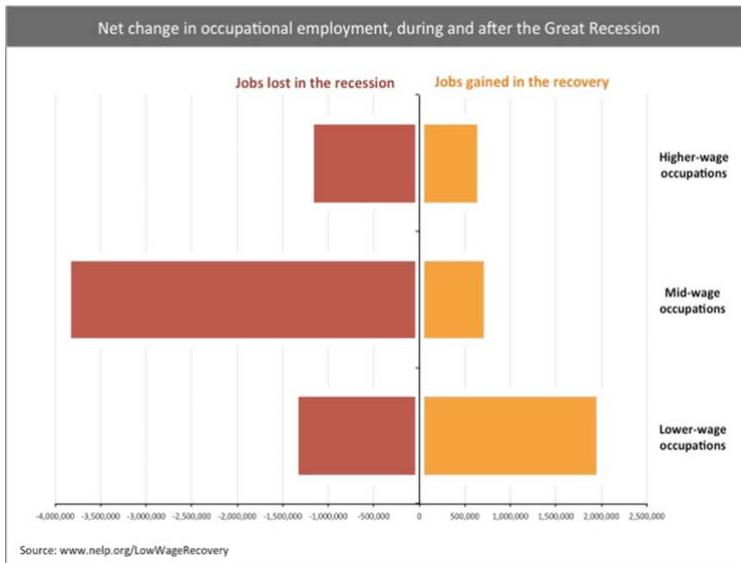
Raise Up Massachusetts is working to raise the minimum wage to \$10.50 with indexing to ensure that it keeps pace with the rising cost of living. An increase in the minimum wage would impact one in five workers in Massachusetts and give them the financial stability to provide for their families.

WHY A STRONG MINIMUM WAGE IS NECESSARY AND WHY NOW

Over the past 40 years, the buying power of the minimum wage, which is \$8.00/hr today in Massachusetts, has significantly decreased. **People in low wage jobs have to work more and have less to show for it.**

- A full-time worker making minimum wage today in Massachusetts will earn about \$16,000 per year¹
- In 1968, the same minimum wage worker would have earned over \$21,000 per year (measured in real, inflation-adjusted dollars)

The Real Value of the Minimum Wage Has Dropped 24 Percent Since 1968



Even a college degree is not enough. Almost 60% of people with 4 years of college or more can't find a job that pays at least \$37,000 with benefits.

Raising the minimum wage now would help over **600,000** Massachusetts residents (1 out of every 5 workers) and put **\$1 billion every year** back into our local communities. This is an important stimulus to local economies.

Contact your regional MCAN organizer for more specific data to your region.

¹ http://www.massbudget.org/report_window.php?loc=swma_2013.html

Workers by City/Region Affected by Minimum Wage Increase from \$8.00 to \$10 an hour

City/Region	Directly Affected	*Indirectly Affected	Total	% of Workforce
Boston	34,745	20,846	55,591	20.30%
Chelsea, Revere, and Winthrop	5,340	5011	10,352	21.30%
Quincy, Milton	5487	3432	8919	15%
Malden, Medford	9713	5029	14,743	25.60%
Greater Brockton	6122	5114	11,236	23.50%
Greater Taunton	5520	7454	13,974	24.70%
Greater Fall River	5635	3809	9,444	18.60%
Greater New Bedford	12,222	8615	20,837	26%
Greater Plymouth	7600	5,516	13,116	17%
Greater Attleboro	7991	5629	13,620	22.80%
Worcester	9327	8456	17,694	21.60%
Framingham, Natick	5005	3711	8716	17.20%
North Central (Fitchburg, Leominster)	7510	6192	13,702	20.90%
Springfield	10,694	5247	15,941	28.50%
Chicopee, Holyoke	7597	4573	12,171	24.80%
Greater Pittsfield	6453	5979	12,433	25.10%
Lowell	5752	6566	12,318	24.70%
Greater Lawrence	7214	6574	13,788	20%
Northern Central Essex (Haverhill, N.Andover, Boxford)	5293	4270	9,563	16.50%
Greater Lynn	6024	6128	12,152	22.70%
Eastern Essex (Salem, Beverly, Marblehead)	6302	4211	10,514	16.40%
Central Essex (Peabody, Danvers, Lynnfield)	5342	4596	9,937	17.70%
Northern Essex (Gloucester, Newburyport)	4476	3401	7,877	17.30%
Central Cape	7653	6615	14,268	23.30%

Source: "Regional Impact of a Minimum Wage Increase" by MA Budget and Policy Center, January 2013
http://www.massbudget.org/report_window.php?loc=minimum_wage_regional.html

*Indirectly Affected are those earning just above the possible new minimum wage at \$10 (e.g. those earning \$10-\$12 an hour), a portion of whom would see wage increases over time if the floor for the minimum wage went up from \$8 to \$10 an hour.

Note: This research shows the number of people that will benefit from an increase to \$10 an hour, and the current ballot referendum is for an increase to \$10.50 an hour, with indexing.

Ballot Process:

- **When will these ballot questions appear before the voters?** If each question gets at least 68,911 certified signatures and the legislature doesn't enact it, the question will appear on the November General Election Ballot in 2014.
- **If I sign, does that mean I am pledging to vote for this question?** No, signing the petition just means that you are allowing the question appear before the voters – it's not a commitment or a pledge of support.
- **Can I sign if I am not from Massachusetts?** No, the only people who can sign the petition are registered voters from Massachusetts.

Minimum Wage:

- **What would the question do?** The question would increase the minimum wage to \$8.00 to \$10.50 and assure that it keeps up with the cost of living.
- **How would that be phased in?** The minimum wage would increase from \$8.00 to \$9.25 on January 1st, 2015 and \$9.25 to \$10.50 on January 1st, 2016.
- **How will the minimum wage keep up with the cost of living?** The minimum wage will be adjusted annually to keep up with the cost of living based on the Consumer Price Index.
- **How will this affect tipped employees?** The minimum wage for tipped employees will be increased from \$2.63 an hour to \$4.15 an hour on January 1st, 2015 and to \$6.30 an hour on January 1st, 2016
- **Won't this hurt the economy?** No, a higher minimum wage means more purchasing power for low-wage workers and their families, which is good for the economy. In fact, a study from the Economic Policy Institute found that a higher minimum wage will actually create 4,500 new jobs in Massachusetts.
- **Doesn't the minimum wage just affect teenagers?** A higher minimum wage will mean a raise for more than 20% of Massachusetts workers. There are actual 277,000 workers with children who will be affected by the minimum wage increase.

Earned Sick time:

- **How much sick time can I earn each year?** Employees can earn up to 40 hours of sick time per calendar year. Employees with more generous sick time benefits will continue to enjoy their more generous coverage.
- **How do I earn my sick time?** Employees earn their sick time at the rate of 1 hour for every 30 hours worked.
- **How can I use my earned sick time?** Earned sick time can be used for the employee's own health needs or the health needs of a child, parent, spouse or parent of a spouse, including for recovery from a physical or mental illness or injury, preventive care or medical appointments, and to address the employee's domestic violence needs or those of the employee's dependent child.
- **Do I get paid while out on earned sick time?** For companies with 11 or more employees, workers can earn up to 40 hours of paid sick time per year. For companies with fewer than 11 employees, workers can earn up to 40 hours of unpaid sick time per year.
- **Can I lose my job, pay, promotion or raise because I use my sick time?** No. You cannot be subject to retaliation just for using your earned sick time.



Signature Sabbath Planning Sheet

On the weekend of October 4-6 there will be dozens of congregations across MA collecting signatures for economic dignity to increase the minimum wage and secure earned sick time for all MA workers.

What is your story? Why are you in this fight for economic dignity?

Our goal for the number of signatures to collect on the weekend of October 5-6, or by Nov 20:

From our congregation: _____

At other congregations or at public events: _____

Total: _____

Our team captain(s) will be:

Brainstorming potential canvassers to collect after worship (recommend 1 per 30 people in congregation):

Who will ask them?

When will we do brief orientation and role playing (recommend the week before or 30 min before the service):

Tips:

- Clergy's sermon lays out the issue with a powerful faith reflection; second best is a good pulpit announcement
- Hold a brief training and role playing for the canvassers before the service
- At least 2 canvassers per door; each canvasser has at least 4 clipboards
- Ideally 1 canvasser per 30 people that come to church
- If congregation has people that comes from different cities/towns, have sheets for the most popular cities and towns on the clipboard and a few blank sheets for people to fill in from other towns
- Utilize tables, if makes sense at your location, and direct some of the overflow crowd to tables. Tables should have at least 10 clipboards set up.
- Depending on congregational size, canvass 2-3 weekends in a row, all services

Next Steps: Turn in signatures to an MCAN organizer

Training for Signature Collectors at Signature Sabbaths

Thank you for your prophetic leadership in helping to increase the minimum wage and secure earned sick time for all MA full time workers.

Your job:

Collect signatures from congregants that are registered voters, generally immediately following worship service.

Mindset:

Most people think that asking people for things feels like begging, or like asking for a favor. When people say no, it is easy to feel rejected. What if we thought of canvassing instead as **a sacred gift**.

- These people want the minimum wage to be higher, because it will help them, or people they know, or because they believe it is the right thing to do.
- You are helping them to channel this desire into action in the easiest way possible - a simple signature of their names.
- When people work to raise the minimum wage, they are participating in the sacred work of honoring every person, and treating everyone with dignity. By offering those that want it that opportunity, we are helping them to do holy work.
- Some people will say no. Your goal is to keep reaching out and making this opportunity available to those that want it.

Approach:

1. Be prepared with atleast 4 clipboards. On two clipboards have signature forms to raise the minimum wage and the other two with forms to secure earned sick time.
2. You can only have **one city/town per signature form**. Thus, write the names of the most common cities and towns that people are from on the first few blank signature forms. Leave a few blank forms for people that are from other towns.
3. Sample script:
 - A. **Opener:** “As a follow up to Rev. ____’s sermon/announcement, can you sign to increase the minimum wage?”
 - B. **The confirmation:** “Where in MA are you registered to vote?”
(go to correct sheet)
 - C. **Walk them through:** “Sign there, put your address there, don’t worry if you don’t know your ward and precinct.”
 - D. **Now for Round 2:** “Will you also sign for earned sick time?”
4. If people’s signature is not legible, have them print their name in the same box.
5. **Keep the signature forms totally clean** except for the signatures and addresses. Sheets will be disqualified if there is underlining, highlighting, pen scribbles, initials or phone numbers.

Potential Challenges:

What to do when people want to talk:

- If people have simple questions and you know the answers, go ahead and answer.
- Because our goal is to gather as many signatures as possible, try not to spend more than 3 minutes with any one person.
- If they want to keep talking, just be clear with them, "I'd love to talk to you some other time, but I want to make sure I get as many signatures as I can."
- If someone wants to argue with you, it is probably best to be kind but move on. Say something like, "I respect your opinion, and would love to agree to disagree. I am committed to this effort, and need to keep working toward my goal."

Thanking people:

In our world, too many actions go unappreciated. Not only work, but also acts of goodness and kindness. In a campaign that focuses on appreciating our labors, it is critical that we thank people genuinely for taking time out of their busy lives to sign.

Do's and Don'ts:**Do:**

- Invite everyone to COLLECT signatures: adults, kids, voters, non-voters, citizens non-citizens.
- Only have one city or town per each signature sheet.
- Keep each signature form perfectly clean.
- Ask an MCAN organizer, or your city/town coordinator for blank signature papers.

Don't:

- Don't have anyone sign. ONLY collect signatures from registered voters.
- Remember all signatures from OTHER city/towns aside from the primary will be disqualified.
- Squiggles, highlighting, underlines, names or initials, or phone number – ALL these will get signatures disqualified.
- Don't print yourself. Wrong paper size, color, 1 sided paper will be disqualified.

After collection: Turn in signature forms to an MCAN organizer or your city/town coordinator.

Time to role play and practice!

Congregations Can Support Signature Gathering for Ballot Measures

Guidelines for 501(c)(3) Congregations & Organizations

501(c)(3)s public charities (including congregations) CAN and should actively support or oppose ballot initiatives like raising minimum wage and securing earned sick time. Supporting a ballot initiative is legally considered “direct lobbying” – a permissible activity within the generous limits allowed by federal law.

► You CAN:

- **Gather signatures** to qualify these initiatives for the ballot at your congregation.
- **Encourage your congregants/organization members to vote YES** on these initiatives next November. This includes preaching, speakers at meetings, notices in congregation/organization publications, etc. This is fully permissible throughout the election cycle.
- **Encourage the general public to vote YES** by speaking at public events like rallies and press conferences, by writing letters to the editor or by lending your name to a list of endorsers.
- **Educate your congregation/organization members and the general public on the positions of elected officials and candidates** regarding the ballot initiative. The law on this does become stricter in the two weeks before the election so we suggest you do not mention the names of candidates and elected officials during that time.
- **Ask about a candidate’s position on these propositions** in both private and public forums including debates organized by your church or non-profit, non-partisan organizations.
- **Register people to vote** and encourage them to vote for or against a ballot measure.
- **Make donations** to a ballot initiative campaign, as long your contributions constitute an “insubstantial part” of your overall budget. Tax practitioners recommend that contributions less than 5% of your budget are safe. Money spent speaking only to your members (i.e. printing a notice in the bulletin for services) does not count towards that total. Donations made by congregants themselves (i.e through a special collection) do not count towards that total. Volunteer efforts do not count toward that total.

► You CANNOT:

- **Spend more than an “insubstantial part” of your budget** to support a ballot initiative. See the specific guidelines under “Make donations” above.
- **Support or oppose candidates** for public office. Just because a 501(c)(3) may work on a ballot measure does not mean that it may also comment on candidates included on the same ballot. A 501(c)(3) cannot use its support of or opposition to a ballot initiative as a way to indirectly support or oppose a candidate.
- **Tell people how to vote for a certain candidate** based on their position on the ballot initiative.

► You SHOULD REPORT:

- **Any cash expenditure over \$500** calling on the **general public** to vote YES on these initiatives.
- **Any cash expenditure over \$2,000** calling on your own **membership** to vote YES.

It is adapted from the document “Alliance for Justice Ballot Measures and Public Charities: Yes, You Can Influence That Vote” <http://www.afj.org/assets/resources/cases/Ballot-Measures.pdf>. It provides general guidelines only, and is intended to serve as an overview. Because the application of law is fact-sensitive and context is critical, it should not be relied upon as legal advice. An

organization should consult with an attorney to receive guidance on special rules governing its conduct. For additional information contact the Alliance for Justice at 202-822-6070 or www.allianceforjustice.org