



The Rev. Dr. Suzanne Webb  
President  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

The Rev. Ronald Cunningham  
Vice president  
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

Mr. Abraham Wright  
Secretary  
International Council of Community Churches

Elder James Tse  
Treasurer  
Presbyterian Church (USA)

The Rev. Patrice L. Rosner  
Director

## **Appeal to Congress: Seeking Justice in Our Land**

October 24, 2006

Dear Members of Congress:

We write to you on the eve of the 2006 elections, as leaders of eleven faith communities who have come together in Churches Uniting in Christ and pledged to combat racism together in our churches and in our society as the hallmark of this new relationship. We represent over 25 million communicants nationwide.

We are grateful that the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress renewed expiring provisions of the Voting Rights Act, but we remain deeply concerned that Congress has failed to address the issue of the federal minimum wage. It is time to put this important matter of economic and racial justice in a prominent place in the national debate and to act upon it when Congress returns after the elections.

Through the millennia prophets have called for economic justice for all. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said, "There is nothing except shortsightedness to prevent us from guaranteeing an annual minimum – and livable – income for every American family." Pope John Paul II stated, "In every case, a just wage is the concrete means of verifying the justice of the whole socioeconomic system." Today we add our appeal to these voices.

There is a growing hidden underclass in the United States today. By keeping the minimum wage as a poverty wage, Congress compounds this reality that has major impact on all segments in our society. But poverty disproportionately affects people of color who, according to a report from the U.S. Census Bureau, experience a higher rate of poverty in this country. Indeed, African Americans and Hispanics are nearly three times as likely to live under the poverty line, and nearly two times as likely to live under twice the official poverty.

The real value of the minimum wage today is nearly \$4.00 less than it was in 1968. Minimum wage workers today have less buying power than minimum wage workers did in 1950. At the same time, Congress clearly recognizes the results of inflation when it gives itself raise after raise, most recently this summer.

**Signatures in next page**

Moral arguments were central to the fight to end slavery in the United States. Moral arguments are central to our fight to combat racism and to promote justice today. Justice delayed is justice denied. As church leaders we are profoundly committed to justice not only for our own constituencies but also for the good of the entire nation. We urge you to step up *now*, to speak *now*, to act *now* to increase the federal minimum wage.

Signed,



Bishop Philip R. Cousin, Sr.  
Senior Bishop  
African Methodist Episcopal Church



Bishop George W. Walker, Sr.  
Senior Bishop  
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church



The Rev. Dr. Sharon E. Watkins  
General Minister and President  
Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ)



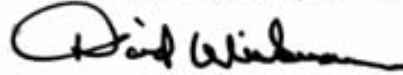
Bishop Williams Graves, Sr.  
Senior Bishop  
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

The Rev. Mark Hanson  
Presiding Bishop  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



The Most Rev. Frank T. Griswold  
Presiding Bishop and Primate  
Episcopal Church, USA

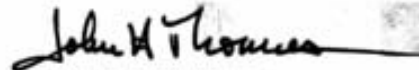
The Rev. Michael Livingston  
President  
International Community Churches



The Rev. David Wickmann  
President, Provincial Elders  
Moravian Church Northern Province



The Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick  
States Clerk of the General Assembly  
Presbyterian Church (USA)



The Rev. John H. Thomas  
General Minister and President  
Untied Church of Christ



The Rev. Dr. Larry D. Pickens  
General Secretary, Ecumenical Staff Officer  
The United Methodist Church

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