

LIFT UP OAKLAND

Talking Points to Raise the Minimum Wage



A Positive Overarching Campaign

Because this is a “YES” vote, we need to ensure that we lead with a positive vision for people to say YES to and not get caught in negatives. People in Oakland, LOVE Oakland, so let’s capitalize on that pride and present a positive vision. When thinking of a message, think of an ending to this sentence, “I’m voting YES because I want to see...”

Positive Talking Points – NO MATTER WHAT, PIVOT TO THESE

- **THRIVING FAMILIES:** I want to live in a city where if you work, we can provide for our families, put food on the table, and take care of ourselves and our kids when we are sick. People would be able to get off public assistance and be able to quit our second jobs to spend more time with our families.
- **THRIVING ECONOMY:** When workers earn more – we spend more in our local businesses, infusing millions into our local economy. This creates jobs and generates tax revenue that can be used for schools, public safety, and infrastructure, lifting our entire community. We’re bringing hope back to Oakland.
- **THRIVING BUSINESSES:** Raising standards for low-wage workers lowers turnover and attracts stronger job applicants. This makes workers more productive and lowers cost and builds our local businesses.
- **THRIVING HEALTH:** Having paid sick days means healthier workers and a healthier Oakland – no one should have to WE ARE A COALITION of workers, community members, faith leaders, students, and small businesses.
- Together, we believe that we have to lift up our lowest paid workers to lift up our community.

Sound Bites

- People need \$12.25 so we can survive.
- We’re talking about 25K to live in the Bay.
- When workers earn more, we spend more in local businesses.
- No one should have to choose between their paychecks and their health.
- Our community thrives when everyone thrives.
- We’re bringing hope back to Oakland.

Defensive Messaging – USE IF REPORTER GOES NEGATIVE

- **WORKERS CAN’T MAKE ENDS MEET:** \$8 an hour is not enough in the Bay Area, and full-time minimum wage workers live below the federal poverty line. People are making impossible choices between food, rent, and child care every day today, and we can’t wait until 2016 to put food on the table for our families. PIVOT TO POSITIVE MESSAGE.
- **WORKERS ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE:** Many workers earning \$8 an hour qualify for food stamps, rent assistance, and taxpayer-funded health care. Corporations like Walmart and McDonalds are forcing taxpayers to shoulder the burden for their poverty wages. That’s taxpayer money that could be used to fix our crumbling schools, increase public safety, and create jobs. PIVOT TO POSITIVE MESSAGE.
- **CORPORATIONS NEED TO PAY THEIR FAIR SHARE:** Most of the companies paying minimum wage are multibillion

dollar, multi-national companies like Walmart and McDonald's who take profits out of our community. These companies must start paying their fair share by paying workers enough to live. PIVOT TO POSITIVE MESSAGE

Q&A

Q: This policy puts too much of a burden on business.

A: By raising the minimum wage, workers actually spend more in our local businesses, infusing millions into our local economy. This creates jobs and generates tax revenue that can be used for schools, public safety, and infrastructure, lifting our entire community.

Q: The minimum wage is already being raised, why do we need to raise it again.

A: \$9 or \$10 an hour is not enough to live in the Bay Area, and people are making impossible choices between food, rent, and child care. We're talking about \$25K to live in the Bay.

Q: Businesses will shut down and move elsewhere.

A: We didn't see a mass flight of business from SF or SJ when they upped the MW, and we won't see that here. Oakland is a special place where people want to do business because of our loyal consumer base. Oaklanders like to do business in Oakland, and by upping the minimum wage, that actually means people will have more money in their pockets to spend in our community.

Q: Businesses will cut hours and lay off employees.

A We haven't seen very much of that in SF or SJ as businesses adjust. Businesses don't want to lose employees. More money in workers pockets means more local spending which actually builds local businesses.

Q: Businesses will raise prices on consumers.

A: The cost of living has skyrocketed, and wages have remained stagnant for years. This is actually good for our economy. By raising the minimum wage, workers actually spend more in our local businesses, infusing millions into our community. This creates jobs and generates tax revenue that can be used for schools, public safety, and infrastructure. Everyone benefits.

Q: Oakland's small business community is just getting on its feet, and this will crush them.

A: There are hundreds of small businesses who want to pay a decent wage but don't want to be at a competitive disadvantage. More importantly, Oaklanders love our small businesses, and when people earn more, they spend more in local businesses, making our economy thrive.

Q: Anything about tipped workers

A: Contrary to popular belief, most tipped workers struggle to get by. Servers share their tips with bus boys, line cooks, and bar backs. Tips fluctuate depending on the shift they get and whether the restaurant did well that week. But their rent and other bills stay the same.

Q: Oakland is different than SF and SJ because we don't have the tourism and thriving business communities of those other cities.

A: Oakland is a vibrant city, and Oaklanders love Oakland businesses. We're talking about strengthening our economy. When low-income workers are paid more, they spend more, infusing millions into our community. Additionally, Oakland is getting a lot of press nationally and people are coming from all over the Bay Area, the region and the country to get a taste of Oakland – a hip cool city.

Q: Many people who work in Oakland don't live here, so that money will be taken out of our community.

A: Firstly, people should be able to afford where they work, and right now, many low-wage workers are being pushed out of Oakland. But regardless of where they live, workers spend money in Oakland on their lunch hour and after work. Besides, this is about lifting up the whole region.

Q: This ballot initiative is complicated and there's a lot of fine print that they aren't talking about that's bad for business and our community.

A: Let's not confuse things. This is about raising the standard of living for thousands of people living in poverty. We're talking about being able to put food on the table, keep a roof over our heads, and being able to take care of yourself and children when you are sick. This is about creating healthy workers, healthy families, and a healthy economy.

Q: Teenagers are the only ones in minimum wage jobs – they aren't meant to be family sustaining.

A: Oakland has thousands of minimum wage workers, and the majority of them are over 21 years old. This measure isn't about students and teenagers; it's about a living wage for hard working people no matter what their age.

Q: Any question about the Unz initiative or other proposals

A: We support anything that raises the minimum wage. However, ours is the most comprehensive. It has an annual cost of living increase, it has sick days, and it gets people to \$12.25 in March, 2015. People need to put food on the table now, not years from now.

Q: Any question about the City Council

A: Community members came together and developed what we feel is the most comprehensive bill to move thousands of people out of poverty and provide sick days so that no one would have to choose between their health and a paycheck. We encourage the City Council to join our coalition and help us get this on the ballot.

Q: Any question about would we strike a deal with the city so we don't have to collect signatures

A: Bringing this to the people is a good thing. Oaklanders understand that the economic health of our city depends on lifting those who can't afford to meet their basic needs, and we expect a movement of support just as it's sweeping across the country. Oaklanders are excited to vote yes on this.

Q: Why \$12.25?

A: Ultimately, we'd like to get to a living wage and \$12.25 is a great starting point. There is so much momentum across the country to get to a wage that families can live on.

Q: Who will be impacted?

A: Approximately 20% of Oakland workers make under \$12.25 an hour. These are retail workers, food service workers, grocery workers, those who help care for our children and our elders.

Q: Why aren't there any exemptions?

A: No matter where we work, we should be able to make ends meet and take care of our families. Local Oakland businesses are investing in low-wage workers, and when workers thrive, our whole community thrives.

Q: What is the process for getting it on the ballot:

A: Oaklanders like me will help gather 35,000 signatures to qualify the initiative for the November ballot. Oakland residents are really excited about this and want to help our community members thrive, and our economy thrive. We're all excited to bring home back to Oakland and VOTE YES!