

## SUPPORTING SIGNATURE-GATHERING FOR INITIATIVE 1433

*Sponsored by Teresa Mosqueda, PCO 1730*

WHEREAS income inequality in Washington State continues to increase;

WHEREAS low-income workers suffer not just from poverty wages, but also from lack of sick and safe leave;

WHEREAS as Democrats, we are committed to the principle that all workers should be able to work full time and not live in poverty, and should have the right to earn paid sick and safe days for themselves and their families;

WHEREAS the city councils, other jurisdictions, and other states have successfully adopted paid sick and safe days standards and increased the minimum wage that help local economies, protect public health, increase worker income, and create shared prosperity with businesses and workers;

WHEREAS over one million Washington workers have limited paid leave to deal with their health needs or the consequences of domestic violence, and 40% have no paid sick leave, so that even a minor illness or injury can lead to a family economic crisis;

WHEREAS even those workers who do have paid sick leave often face discipline when they use their earned time or cannot access their paid sick leave banks on the first day they are sick;

WHEREAS when workers are denied paid sick leave they often have no other choice but to go to work sick, which is bad for the health of the workers, their co-workers and the general public;

WHEREAS there are currently 730,000 workers in Washington who are earning less than \$13.50 an hour, and the impact of low wages on workers is compounded by less-than-full-time hours and unpredictable schedules;

WHEREAS once controlling for inflation, neither women's nor men's median earnings significantly increased between 2013 and 2014 in the United States;

WHEREAS the federal minimum wage should have reached \$21.72 an hour in 2012 if it kept up with increases in worker productivity since 1968;

WHEREAS low minimum wages negatively impact all workers by dragging wages down in various industries and sectors, and have a disproportionate impact on women and people of color;

WHEREAS six in ten poor adults are women, more than half of all poor children live in families headed by women, poverty rates are especially high for single mothers, women of color, and elderly women living alone;

WHEREAS more than half (54%) of minimum wage workers are white; one in four is Hispanic (26%), which shows an over-representation of workers of color living in poverty;

WHEREAS Initiative 1433 was introduced in January 2016 by a coalition of workers, community groups, the faith community and others to begin to raise wages and provide sick and safe leave for all workers in Washington;

WHEREAS Initiative 1433 calls for the state minimum wage to phase-in to \$13.50 by the year 2020, and require employers to provide up to seven days of paid sick leave for workers;

WHEREAS Initiative 1433 when implemented would mean an additional \$607 a month for a worker who currently makes \$10.00 an hour, and would create \$2.5 billion more in earnings annually for over 730,000 low-wage workers across the state;

WHEREAS Initiative 1433 would allow workers to earn one hour of paid sick and safe leave for every forty hours worked, allowing part time and full time workers to take leave if they or their family members are sick;

WHEREAS Initiative 1433 includes safe leave, an important policy component, which ensures that victims of domestic violence can use their paid safe leave if needed to seek medical attention or seek safety from an abuser;

WHEREAS, according to statewide polling completed in 2015, nearly nine-in-10 Democrats (87%) support the proposed increase in the minimum wage to \$13.50 by 2020, and majorities of self-identified Democrats (88%) support providing paid up to 7 days of sick and safe leave to workers; and

WHEREAS Initiative 1433 specifically states in Section 11 that "nothing in the act precludes local jurisdictions from enacting additional local fair labor standards that are more favorable to employees, including but not limited to more generous minimum wage or paid sick leave requirements," which allows local municipalities to continue to pass higher minimum wages and other labor standard protections;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 36th District Democrats support the signature-gathering efforts to place Initiative 1433 on the ballot, to pass paid sick and safe days so that all Washingtonians can have up to seven days of leave a year, and to increase the state minimum wage to \$13.50 phased-in by the year 2020.