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## **Milk, eggs, not much else: Workers, U.S. lawmakers demonstrate what the federal minimum wage can actually buy**

*Grocery giveaway on Capitol Hill spotlights newly introduced Living Wage For All Act and the growing movement nationwide to ensure every job pays enough to live on*

**WASHINGTON** — Restaurant workers and federal lawmakers gathered near Capitol Hill today to demonstrate the growing gap between wages and the cost of living, handing out groceries while calling on Congress to pass the federal [Living Wage For All Act](#).

Organized by [One Fair Wage](#) and the [Living Wage For All Coalition](#), advocates and allies highlighted the purchasing power of the current federal minimum wage, which has been \$7.25 an hour since 2009 and barely covers a gallon of milk and a carton of eggs. This was contrasted with what a proposed federal \$25 living wage for all could provide: a full bag of groceries with protein, fresh produce, and other essentials.

While the cost of living skyrockets, millions of workers are paid wages that fall far short of what they need to afford housing, food, healthcare, and childcare. The bill would increase the federal minimum wage to \$25 per hour over the next several years, resulting in raises for over [66 million working Americans](#). It would also eliminate all subminimum wages for tipped workers, youth workers and workers with disabilities, who are currently paid as little as \$2.13 an hour in several states. And a built-in wage adjustment would keep the federal floor aligned with typical wages across the economy to prevent future wage stagnation.

**U.S. Rep Analilia Mejia (NJ-11)**, co-lead sponsor of the Living Wage For All Act, and co-sponsors **Reps. Rashida Tlaib (MI-12)**, **Jonathan Jackson (IL-01)**, and **Melanie Stansbury (NM-01)** joined workers in the growing call for a federal living wage that reflects the real cost of living. The April launch of the House bill was followed by last week's introduction of its \$25 federal minimum wage counterpart in the U.S. Senate, sponsored by Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT). The bicameral legislation is also supported by more than 100 labor unions and advocacy organizations.

"A job should not mean poverty; a job should mean dignity. Our residents are in survivor mode," said **Rep. Rashida Tlaib**. "Have you ever talked to someone who teaches our children all day and then has to work another job? Or a server trying to put themselves through school on less than \$3 an hour? It is shameful, and it's 2026. The next [House] vote should be a living wage for all."

The introduction of the federal \$25 an hour living wage bill reflects a growing national movement, following a string of high-profile electoral victories for candidates who have made a \$25 an hour minimum wage central to their campaigns. At the same time, workers and advocates are organizing at the state and local levels across the country — from California and Alaska to Connecticut and Washington, D.C. — to build an economy where one job is enough to live on.

"Half of American workers cannot afford to meet the cost of living — which is no less than \$25 an hour anywhere in the United States," said **Saru Jayaraman, President of One Fair Wage**. "Workers say, 'You want us to vote to save democracy? We work three jobs — what has democracy done for us?' Until we raise the wage to a living wage, we can't expect working people to feel excited about saving democracy."

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*[One Fair Wage](#) is a national organization of nearly 300,000 workers which advocates for a full, fair minimum wage for all workers, with tips on top. The organization works across the country to advance policies that raise wages, improve working conditions, and ensure economic security for millions of workers. One Fair Wage manages and convenes the [Living Wage For All Coalition](#).*