

# **Faith groups push to increase minimum wage to \$10 an hour**

August 14, 2008

WASHINGTON (RNS)—A nonpartisan coalition of more than 90 faith, community, labor and business organizations has launched an ambitious “\$10 in 2010” campaign to raise the federal minimum wage within two years.

The Let Justice Roll Living Wage Campaign announced the “\$10 in 2010” crusade with support from various denominations, including American Baptist Churches USA, the Episcopal Church, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, Muslim American Society Freedom Foundation, Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Christian social justice group Sojourners.

The launch of the new “livable wage” campaign came as the federal minimum wage rose 60 cents to \$6.55 on July 24, part of the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007. The hourly minimum will increase again in 2009 to \$7.25 per hour.

“As people of faith, we believe there is no better way to urgently address the poverty that afflicts so many low-wage working people and their families than by raising the minimum wage,” said Paul Sherry, founding national coordinator of Let Justice Roll.

The two-day event, “Living Wage Days,” is set to kick off Jan. 10, 2009, featuring worship services and community events across the country.

Opponents argue an increased minimum wage will lead to more unemployment and layoffs, especially among young and unskilled workers. They also argue businesses will shift excess worker salary costs to

consumers.

But Sherry said: "A job should keep you out of poverty, not keep you in it. That conviction is at the very heart of the faith we proclaim."