



DeKalb County Government

Agenda Item

Manuel J. Maloof Center
1300 Commerce Drive
Decatur, Georgia 300

SUBSTITUTE

File #: 2022-2118
File Status: Preliminary

6/13/2023

Public Hearing: YES ☐ NO ☒ **Department:** Board of Commissioners - District 6

SUBJECT:

Commission District(s): All District Commission Districts

Adopt A Resolution to Raise the Minimum Wage for DeKalb County Employees to a Living Wage

Information Contact: Commissioner Edward "Ted" Terry

Phone Number: 404-371-4909

PURPOSE:

The Governing Authority of DeKalb County to adopt a resolution to raise the minimum wage for DeKalb County employees to a living wage.

NEED/IMPACT:

Before COVID, the Economic Policy Institute released a new Family Budget Calculator which breaks down exactly how much it costs for a family of four -- two adults and two children -- to live in communities across the country. And it turns out, DeKalb families of four need to make a \$77,245 per year -- \$6,437 per month -- to attain a "modest yet adequate" standard of living.

The current DeKalb County minimum wage of \$15 is no longer a "living wage" based on various consumer price indexes. The impact of inflation has drastically eroded the cost of housing, basic needs, food, gas, childcare, and the purchasing power of savings.

When DeKalb County invests in its workers by giving them living wages, workers are likely to spend or save more of their bigger paychecks, and in the process, stimulate the local, and create new jobs within the community in which they live and serve. Additionally, living wage and compensation packages promote long-term employment and reduce the amount of time and money the governing authority spends on training and retraining employees.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Unknown at this time

RECOMMENDATION:

To approve the resolution and authorize the chief executive officer to execute all necessary documents required to raise the minimum wage for DeKalb County employees to a living wage.

A Resolution to Raise the Minimum Wage for DeKalb County Employees to a Living Wage

WHEREAS, the current minimum wage for DeKalb County employees is \$17 an hour.

WHEREAS, since the 1970s, the American workforce has increased its productivity, wages have stagnated, and purchasing power decreased. During this period, government leaders, business owners, and large corporations claimed they could not afford to pay their employees higher wages, yet the share of the national income held by the wealthiest Americans increased to all-time highs.

WHEREAS, CEOs of large corporations make roughly 300 times what the average worker makes. This trend, together with recent inflationary pressures, has had a devastating effect on working families, especially those living at or near the poverty line.

WHEREAS, campaigns to defeat living wage increases, by right-wing politicians and corporate-backed special interest groups continue to tout trickle-down economic policies that fail to equitably distribute wealth among working people or create long-term, well-paid jobs. These policies enable corporations to compensate their top executives and stockholders while marginalizing their workforce with wage stagnation, and union-busting campaigns.

WHEREAS, in 1938 the Federal Minimum Wage was enacted to ensure that workers are fairly compensated for their labor and can afford a decent quality of life. Since its establishment, however, minor increases have not kept up with inflation. The current DeKalb County minimum wage of ~~\$17.45~~ is no longer a “living wage” based on various consumer price indexes.

WHEREAS, as of June 7, 2023, the MIT [living wage calculator](#) measuring the Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA MSA, documents a living wage as \$18.~~9337~~ an hour for a single adult with no children, and ~~\$35.8933.14~~ an hour for a single adult with 1 child.

WHEREAS, other large urban counties around the nation are raising their minimum wages, [including Cobb County](#), to keep up with the competitiveness for workers, combat increases in transportation and housing costs, and provide better dignity for frontline workers who, if not for their work would cause massive disruptions in vital government services.

WHEREAS, the Employee Relations and Public Safety (ERPS) committee has heard directly from DeKalb County frontline workers that are struggling to pay transportation, housing, and childcare costs, and desperately need a raise, and an opportunity to join a union.

WHEREAS, when DeKalb County invests in its workers by giving them living wages, workers are likely to spend or save more of their bigger paychecks, and in the process, stimulate the local, and create new jobs within the community in which they live and serve. Additionally, living wage and compensation packages promote long-term employment and reduce the amount of time and money the governing authority spends on training and retraining employees.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

The Board of Commissioners requested the DeKalb County Administration, through Human Resources Department, conduct a wage study every three (3) years, with the first review completed by June 1, 2026, to ensure DeKalb employees are receiving a sustainable wage to live and thrive in the communities they serve. The findings of the wage study shall be for informational purposes only and shall not require an increase or decrease to the minimum wage as a result thereof.

ADOPTED by the Board of Commissioners of DeKalb County, this _____ day of _____, 2023.

ROBERT PATRICK
Presiding Officer
Board of Commissioners
DeKalb County, Georgia

APPROVED by the Chief Executive Officer of DeKalb County, this _____ day of _____, 2023.

MICHAEL L. THURMOND
Chief Executive Officer
DeKalb County, Georgia

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

BARBARA NORWOOD-SANDERS, CCC
Clerk to the Board of Commissioners and
Chief Executive Officer
DeKalb County, Georgia

VIVIANE H. ERNSTES
County Attorney

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WHEREAS, as of June 7, 2023, the MIT [living wage calculator](#) measuring the Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA MSA, documents a living wage as \$18.93 an hour for a single adult with no children, and \$35.89 an hour for a single adult with 1 child.

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