

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 \$15 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 \$15 is no longer a “living wage” based on various consumer price indexes.

WHEREAS, the MIT [living wage calculator](#) measuring the Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA MSA, documents a living wage as \$18.37 an hour for a single adult with no children, and \$33.14 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 DeKalb County Board of Commissioners supports a dedicated living wage of \$18.37 an hour for County employees. And this living wage be updated annually by the Human Resources Department, based on the MIT Living Wage Calculator with formula guidance described in the [User Guide and Technical Notes](#); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners endorses mobilizations and campaigns for living wages across the county, state, and country, and will work with labor unions, civil rights organizations, clergy, community groups, and other advocacy groups to raise wages across our community; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners requests the CEO and the Administration develop a budgetary roadmap for the FY 2023 budget that adopts the \$18.37 an hour living wage, and amends the Human Resources Department wage schedule and wage review process to codify this change under the current administrations' HR policies, and to further codify in the form of an ordinance, with the assistance of the Law Dept, amending Chapter 20 of the DeKalb County Organizational Act, section 20-52 reserved, to reflect the direction of this resolution.