**OPINION EDITORIAL TEMPLATES FOR UFCW LOCALS REGARDING THE NEED TO INCREASE THE MINIMUM WAGE**

**Template # 1**

**AMERICA’S WORKERS DESERVE A RAISE**

**By (name of UFCW Leader)**

In his State of the Union Address, President Obama made it clear that raising our country’s federal minimum wage from $7.25 to $10.10 an hour was one of his top priorities. Yet, despite widespread public support for President Obama’s push to raise the minimum wage, big business and House Republicans have opposed this effort, including **(Insert the name of your member of Congress if applicable).**

Staunch opponents of a minimum wage increase also include Speaker John Boehner, who claimed that increasing the minimum wage would hurt our economy. The Speaker even said to the *Weekly Standard*, “I’ll commit suicide before I vote on a clean minimum wage bill.” Other right wing groups have used the minimum wage debate to perpetuate the usual stereotypes about our low income brothers and sisters—including the myth that poor people are lazy and don’t want to work. Speaker Boehner, the Republicans and their special interests have hit a new low in interfering with hard working Americans’ ability to make ends meet.

Quite simply, poor people are poor because they cannot make a living wage. **(Insert a few sentences about your work with low income people and what you do as a community activist here).**

In **(name of community)** alone, there are too many hardworking men and women who are trying to support their families on low wages and meet the rising cost of food, housing and health care. **(Insert a few sentences to describe the local economy and types of businesses in the community)**.

The value of the minimum wage has been declining for more than four decades, and if the minimum wage had kept pace with inflation, it would now be worth well more than $10 per hour. Yet, we are stuck at $7.25 per hour as more and more workers are either falling out of the middle class or struggling in poverty. At the same time, more and more wealth is concentrated in the hands of the one percent.

Reversing the growing gap between the rich and the poor in our state and our country, and providing hardworking men and women with a pathway to the middle class is a moral imperative. I urge members of Congress to take the first step by increasing the minimum wage. No American working a full-time job should be living under the poverty line. While raising the minimum wage is not a perfect solution and will not lift all Americans out of poverty, it will help to facilitate an economic surge in our neighborhoods and communities, and improve the standard of living for millions of American workers nationwide.

People who work deserve a living wage, and it’s time to give hardworking men and women in this country a raise. America’s workers deserve nothing less.

***(Insert name)*** *is the* ***(insert title)*** *of UFCW Local* ***(insert number)*** *in* ***(insert name of city or town).***

**Template # 2**

**IT’S TIME TO RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE**

**By (name of UFCW Local President)**

As the gap between the rich and the poor continues to grow, it’s clear that we need to take bold steps to lift Americans out of poverty and rebuild the middle class. Raising the minimum wage is a good place to start.

In his State of the Union Address, President Obama made it clear that raising our country’s federal minimum wage from $7.25 to $10.10 an hour was one of his top priorities. Yet, despite widespread public support, House Republicans, including **(insert the name of your member of Congress if applicable)** and corporate backers like the National Retail Federation have opposed President Obama’s push to raise the minimum wage.

Groups like the National Retail Federation have used the minimum wage debate to perpetuate the usual stereotypes about low wage workers—including the myth that most retail workers are teenagers who don’t really need the money—when in fact the average retail worker is 37 years old and many have at least one dependent.

Quite simply, poor people are poor because they cannot make a living wage. Here in **(insert state)**, hardworking men and women and their families are struggling to stay afloat because of insufficient wages and benefits. **(Insert a few sentences about the current state of the economy in your community).**

More people work in retail in the United States than in any other industry. The sector is expected to continue to be the dominant source of employment and the largest source of new jobs in the future. Retail jobs often pay only the minimum wage or just above it. Given this reality, an increase in the minimum wage will have a positive and much-needed impact on communities across the country as many retail workers will get a raise.

**(Insert a few sentences about your work as a local president and the people you represent compared to the people you are trying to organize here).**

The value of the minimum wage has been declining for more than four decades, and if the minimum wage had kept pace with inflation, it would now be worth well more than $10 per hour. Yet, we are stuck at $7.25 per hour as more and more workers are either falling out of the middle class or struggling in poverty. At the same time, more and more wealth is concentrated in the hands of the one percent.

No American working full time should live in poverty. While raising the minimum wage is not a perfect solution and will not lift all Americans out of poverty, it will help to facilitate an economic surge in our neighborhoods and communities, and improve the standard of living for millions of American workers nationwide.

Reversing the growing gap between the rich and the poor in our state and our country, and providing hardworking men and women with a pathway to the middle class is a moral imperative. I urge members of Congress to take the first step by increasing the minimum wage.

***(Insert name)*** *is the president of UFCW Local* ***(insert number).***

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR TEMPLATES FOR UFCW LOCALS REGARDING THE NEED TO INCREASE THE MINIMUM WAGE**

Template #1:

Dear **(Insert name of newspaper)** Editor:

RE: (**Insert title of article, date of publication, and reporter’s name)**

As the gap between the rich and the poor continues to grow, it’s clear that we need to take bold steps to lift Americans out of poverty and rebuild the middle class. In **(insert name of city or town)** alone, there are too many hardworking men and women who are struggling to survive.

**(Include a few sentences about the local economy in your city or town.)** Representative (**insert name of local politician**) and the rest of Congress must do more. Raising the minimum wage is a good first step to making the American economy benefit for every working family.

***(Insert name)*** *is the* ***(insert title)*** *of UFCW Local* ***(insert number)*** *in* ***(insert name of city or town).***

Template #2:

Dear **(Insert name of newspaper)** Editor:

RE: (**Insert title of article, date of publication, and reporter’s name)**

According to a 2013 Gallup poll, 71% of Americans support raising the minimum wage. Regardless of party, age, gender or income, a majority of Americans agree that our federal minimum wage has stagnated for far too long. However, our representative, **(insert the name of your member of Congress)** is working against the views of the American people and is opposing a minimum wage increase.

If the vast majority of Americans can unite behind the idea that now is the time for a pay raise for working Americans, surely Representative **(insert last name here)** can too. It’s not too late.

 ***(Insert name)*** *is the* ***(insert title)*** *of UFCW Local* ***(insert number)*** *in* ***(insert name of city or town).***

**SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR FOR UFCW LOCALS REGARDING THE MINIMUM WAGE DEBATE**

Template #3:

Dear **(Insert name of newspaper)** Editor:

RE: (**Insert title of article, date of publication, and reporter’s name)**

If you work full-time for the federal minimum wage, you make just $15,080 a year.

That’s not enough to support yourself, let alone a family.

That’s why members of my union, UFCW Local (**insert local number here**) are united behind raising America’s minimum wage. As grocery store workers, we see every day the damage to families forced to make hard decisions in our checkout lines as they struggle to make ends meet. These workers are good, hard-working people that are not looking for handouts, they are just looking for the ability to support themselves and their families with the work they do.

People who work deserve a living wage, and raising the minimum wage would give 30 million Americans a raise – and a new hope for the future.

***(Insert name)*** *is the* ***(insert title)*** *of UFCW* ***Local (insert number)****, which represents* ***(insert number of workers****) in* ***(insert locations)****.*