

Voting 'Yes' on Prop. I Will Immediately Improve Lives in San Diego - Times of San Diego

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San Diegans rally for a higher minimum wage. Image courtesy Raise Up San Diego

By Anahid Brakke

Amid the noise and fury of this election season, there is one thing on the ballot in San Diego that will immediately improve people's lives. It's at the very bottom of the ballot: [Proposition I](#).

As executive director of the [San Diego Hunger Coalition](#), I join with the leaders of other major community organizations in San Diego in strong support of Proposition I, the Earned Sick Leave and Minimum Wage ordinance.

Opinion

Prop I will raise the minimum wage in San Diego to \$10.50 an hour as soon as the election is certified, and to \$11.50 as of January 2017. And it will provide everyone working in San Diego with access to five earned sick days a year.

This measure was approved by our City Council two years ago, because it was badly needed then. It is now long overdue.

More than one quarter of everyone employed in the city — more than 170,000 hard-working San Diegans — will benefit from passage of Prop I. Given the high cost of living in San Diego, they cannot support their families and live self-sufficiently with wages at or near the current minimum. Many are raising children, and juggling the need for multiple jobs with family needs.

Working full time, year-round at the California minimum wage of \$10 pays just \$20,800 before taxes. That's about \$1,500 a month take-home pay, and every penny of it would be needed to rent a typical two-bedroom apartment in San Diego in 2016, according to [updated housing data](#) analyzed by the [Center on Policy Initiatives](#). That wage is not nearly enough to rent even a one-bedroom apartment here and have money for food, utilities, medical needs, transportation, and other essentials.

Increasing the minimum wage now will immediately help families put food on the table, and that will have long-term benefits.

The number one cause of food insecurity — which means not always having enough to eat — is insufficient income. Hunger causes terrible stress in a household and can affect a child's chance of success at school and later in life.

We all know that people who work full time should not live in poverty. And no one should have to lose a day's pay when they are ill or must stay home to care for a sick child. Anyone who has had a bout of flu knows that five earned sick days per year is a modest and reasonable standard.

Jobs in San Diego should pay enough to meet the basic costs of living here. The current minimum wage is simply not enough to make ends meet, and the recently approved statewide increase will take years to kick in.

It is time to end poverty for those in our community who work hard every day, and Prop I takes an important step in that direction right away. We urge all voters to support San Diego workers and their families by voting YES on Prop I.

Anahid Brakke is executive director of the San Diego Hunger Coalition. Her cosigners on a joint statement supporting Proposition I include: Jeanne Brown, president of the [League of Women Voters San Diego](#); Delores Jacobs, CEO of the [San Diego LGBT Community Center](#); Sue Reynolds, CEO of [Community HousingWorks](#); Diane Takvorian, executive director, [Environmental Health Coalition](#); and Nora Vargas, vice president of community & government relations for the [Planned Parenthood Action](#)

[Fund of the Pacific Southwest](#). A list of more organizations, businesses and individuals who endorse Prop 1 is available at www.RaiseTheWageSD.com/endorsements. >> **Subscribe to Times of San Diego's free daily email newsletter!** [Click here](#)

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