

July 23, 2024

Ms. Chávez Rodriguez  
Harris Campaign Manager  
Delaware Democratic Party Headquarters  
19 E. Commons Blvd.  
New Castle, NE 19720



[ULW Calculator](#)

Dear Ms. Chávez Rodriguez:

I'd like to congratulate you and our friend Kamala for your herculean efforts to promote positive life changes for the American people. I am a life-time advocate for underprivileged individuals. My wife, Sylvia, and I share your desire to build the middle class. However, as you know, for nearly, three decades, Congress has failed to raise the Federal Minimum Wage since 1997) thus failing to provide a pathway for so, so many people from ever entering the middle class. America is a nation of a thousand plus economies. Any attempt to solve economic inequality by simply raising the minimum wage by a single amount (e.g. \$15/hour) only serves to hurt many individuals and even *punish small businesses in rural* America. It will severely damage these economic engines capable of helping people escape poverty. So, I've crafted a simple formula to gradually increase wages to keep pace with the constant rise in the *local* cost of *housing* (*the single most expensive item* in the budget of almost every American). This formula is comprised of existing government guidelines: 1. spend no more than 30% of one's income on housing (a HUD standard), 2. work no more than 40 hours in a week, and 3. it's based on the HUD Fair Market Rents. The Universal Living Wage (now better identified as the **National Locality Wage**), ensures that anyone working 40 hours in a week (be it from one job or more), will be able to afford basic food, clothing, public transportation (to get to and from work), own a cell phone, and afford rental housing (an efficiency apartment) *wherever* that work's done across the United States. By indexing the wage to the local cost of housing, (no matter how high the rent rises), an individual will be able to afford the rent and the basics of life. It *creates opportunity* lost by Congress's failure to act. The formula can also apply to and create a livable income for people receiving SSI.

This is a thumbnail sketch of how to revitalize the Federal Minimum Wage and to reset it to function as a truly practical tool to help young and old alike take steps to enter the workforce and move toward the Middle Class. The alternative is falling into homelessness or ending up on "the dole." Note, half of all new businesses fail because they don't pay to have a *stable* work force. This will change everything.

Sincerely, Richard R. Troxell

Co-Founder/Past President, and current National Education Director of **House the Homeless, Inc.**  
Board Member of the **National Coalition for the Homeless** since 1997

**Vietnam Veteran for Peace**

Author- ***Looking Up at the Bottomline: The Struggle for the Living Wage!***

<https://www.amazon.com/Looking-Up-At-Bottom-Line/dp/1935514997>

***Short Stories in a Long Journey: What it Takes to End and Prevent Homelessness***

<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/short-stories-in-a-long-journey-richard-r-troxell/1140852675>