THE ISSUE: SB 3 *Minimum wage* (Leno, D-San Francisco) would increase the minimum wage in California to $11 per hour beginning in 2016 and $13 per hour in July of 2017. (Support)

**HISTORY & BACKGROUND**

According to the Congressional Research Service, the purchasing power of the federal minimum wage has decreased steadily since 1968 when it was equal to $10.77 in today's dollars. The current federal minimum wage of $7.25/hour would have to be raised by 36% to equal those levels. While federal actions to address this problem are ongoing, the cost of living in California remains significantly higher than other parts of the country, and it is imperative that our state move forward aggressively to combat poverty beyond any minimum federal requirements.

California has not been idle in this regard, and has taken steps to improve the pay of low wage workers. However, under current law, California will not reach a minimum wage of $10/hr until 2016 (still less than the inflation adjusted purchasing power of the minimum wage in 1968).

**CHURCH TEACHING**

As Christians we are commissioned to care for the least among us (Matt 25:40). The Church supports family, which “has its origin in that same love with which the Creator embraces the world,” (John Paul II, *Letter to Families*, 1994) and which is the building block of civilized society. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God’s creation.

**TALKING POINTS**

- It is essential that California increase the minimum wage more rapidly in order to protect low-wage employees’ purchasing power.
- No Californian who works full time should have to live in poverty.
- In the state of California, we still have some two-parent families working for minimum wage that are still living in poverty. We can do better than this.
- Some localities in California have raised the minimum wage even higher, to $12.25/hr in Oakland, by 2018 it will be $15/hr in San Francisco, and starting in July of 2015 some hotels in Los Angeles will be paying its workers $15.37/hr.
- Increasing the minimum wage achieves the twin goals of maintaining a wage floor to keep workers out of poverty and stimulates consumer spending necessary for economic growth.

"A just wage enables people to have adequate access to all the other goods which are destined for our common use.”