

Statement of the Missouri Catholic Conference in Support of the Intent of Proposition B

We, the Catholic bishops of Missouri, issue this statement in support of the intent of Proposition B, the ballot initiative to increase the state minimum wage.

We have seen within our own parish communities the effect that unemployment, underemployment, and low wages have on our own parishioners and on society at large. Too many Missouri citizens live at or below the federal poverty level, including some who work more than one job to support themselves, and a significant percentage of children, who are often supported by the wages of just one parent or caregiver. Many others suffer from despair and hopelessness due to lack of opportunity for meaningful work.

We affirm the basic principle of Catholic social teaching that states “a just wage is the legitimate fruit of work.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 2434) Remuneration for work should guarantee workers “the opportunity to provide a dignified livelihood” for themselves and their families, “taking into account the role and productivity of each, the state of the business, and the common good.” (CCC, No. 2434)

We are not economists and therefore do not opine on what the minimum wage ought to be. We recognize that too high a minimum wage can have a chilling effect on hiring, especially in those industries where profit margins are slim, and/or when teenaged or entry level workers are sought. We support, however, the intent of this proposal which seeks to raise the living standard of the working poor, for whom minimum wage jobs can be all that are available.

We recognize that people of good will may disagree on whether this proposal is appropriate for all sectors of Missouri’s economy, or as it would be applied to urban versus rural communities. This proposal, however, seems reasonable to us as one means of ensuring that those working for minimum wage can make ends meet and provide for the needs of their families.

CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF MISSOURI



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert J. Carlson".

Most Reverend Robert J. Carlson
Executive Chairman
Archbishop of St. Louis



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James V. Johnston, Jr.".

Most Reverend James V. Johnston, Jr.
Vice Chairman
Bishop of Kansas City-St. Joseph



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shawn McKnight".

Most Reverend W. Shawn McKnight
General Chairman
Bishop of Jefferson City



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward M. Rice".

Most Reverend Edward M. Rice
Bishop of Springfield-Cape Girardeau