

In December 2014, following consensus Units in November, the LWVBC board approved our League's new position under Social Policy.

WAGES

BACKGROUND Our [The LWVBC] position on Wages [in Boulder County], adopted in 2014, is based upon our LWVUS position on Meeting Basic Human Needs (<http://lww.org/content/meeting-basic-human-needs>): “The LWVUS believes that one of the goals of social policy in the U.S. should be to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families and that the most effective social programs are those designed to prevent or reduce poverty. ... Persons ... whose earnings are inadequate ... have the right to an income and/or services sufficient to meet their basic needs”

The working poor face multiple issues, including low wages, employers’ reliance on part-time workers, cutbacks in federal assistance, the “cliff effect” that lowers benefits disproportionately when wages rise, and the Colorado law that prohibits local jurisdictions from setting an adequate minimum wage for the locality. We continue to support government assistance to the working poor until wage policies that promote self-sufficiency are fully implemented.

OUR POSITION

The LWVBC believes that just as Colorado can set a minimum wage above the federal minimum wage, so local jurisdictions should be able to exceed the state minimums. We oppose legislation that prohibits such local action.

We believe that alleviating poverty is the shared responsibility of government, employers, individuals, and non-profit assistance organizations. All sectors should be involved in setting an adequate minimum wage or living wage.

The living wage is the minimum required to avoid poverty without government assistance and subsidies. The living wage (gross income) should cover the costs of food, clothing, housing, energy, transportation, health care, K–12 education, child care, taxes (income, Social Security), and supplemental expenses for work and school.

In determining a living wage, a jurisdiction should consider the local cost of living, the national Consumer Price Index, and other reliable and measurable data.

When a jurisdiction makes changes to wage laws, it should ensure that data regarding the effects of those changes are collected and distributed.
