

STATEMENT ON LOW-INCOME WORKERS

Speak up, judge righteously, champion the poor and the needy. Proverbs 31:9

The American Jewish Community has a long and distinguished tradition of being in the forefront of efforts to reduce economic poverty in the United States. There are several reasons for this. In addition to the Jewish immigrant experience in this nation, the concept of “Tikkun Olam” (repair of the world) requires Jews to work for the welfare of all persons. Moreover, Judaism embodies a sense of ethical responsibility to everybody in our nation to assure them the basic necessities of life and to use our efforts to provide all people with the ability to maintain their economic well-being and dignity.

The Jewish Community Council of Greater Washington calls upon its member organizations and all Jewish organizations to renew, with vigor, their efforts to “speak up,” to “judge righteously,” and to “champion the poor and the needy.” The work that Jews and Jewish organizations are doing to provide direct and indirect assistance to the poor and the needy in this nation must continue and grow.

Another means for championing the cause of the poor and the needy is for Jewish organizations to advocate for improved and enhanced government programs designed to enable workers to achieve economic well-being with dignity. There are several different ways to accomplish this end, including, but not limited to: setting a minimum wage, mandating higher wages for workers employed by enterprises receiving government monies (commonly referred to as

“Living Wage”), mandating certain minimum employee benefits; and providing subsidies targeted to low-income workers for services such as childcare, healthcare, transportation, housing, etc.

The Jewish Community Council of Greater Washington recognizes that each governmental jurisdiction is different, with different local circumstances, and thus further recognizes that not all forms of government initiatives are appropriate for all jurisdictions and circumstances.

Therefore the Jewish Community Council of Greater Washington strongly encourages its member organizations to advocate for the most efficacious combination of programs to help raise the standard of living for low-income workers while taking into consideration the exigent circumstances of their local community.

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