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The Black, Latino and Asian Caucus Backs Fair Wages Act

Ensuring living wages in large taxpayer-subsidized development is the responsible thing to do

NEW YORK, NY – As the New York City Council considers adopting the Fair Wages for New Yorkers Act (INT. NO. 251-A), the Black, Latino and Asian Caucus (BLAC) voted to support its passage.

“New Yorkers want and deserve to know that their tax dollar investments will result in living wage jobs for their communities. And developers want and deserve to know with certainty the standards their plans must meet in order to gain City Council approval

As the elected representatives of a majority of New Yorkers, we support this living wage legislation because it is the right thing to do,” said BLAC Co-Chair Robert Jackson, representing the 7th Councilmanic District in Manhattan.

“As long-term unemployment, poverty and hunger grow, it is incumbent upon us, as City Council members, to take action to improve the lives of all New Yorkers. That is why we support the passage of the Fair Wages for New Yorkers Act. Those who oppose this vital legislation are on the wrong side of history,” said BLAC Co-Chair Fernando Cabrera, representing the 14th Councilmanic District in the Bronx.

The Fair Wages for New Yorkers Act will:

- Guarantee that workers in large development projects receiving public subsidies are paid at least the New York City Living Wage of \$10.00 an hour;
- Require that employees who do not receive health insurance from their employer receive an additional \$1.50 per hour wage supplement to help them purchase their own health insurance;
- With exemptions for small businesses, non-profits, and affordable housing projects, apply the living wage guarantee to all workers at a subsidized development project, regardless of whether they are employed directly by the developer.

Every year, New York City spends billions of taxpayer dollars to subsidize economic development in the name of job creation – funding everything from the Bronx Gateway Mall and Yankee Stadium, to the Goldman Sachs building and the redevelopment of Coney Island.

Too often, the jobs created with these public subsidies pay poverty wages with no benefits – whether it’s retail and stockroom jobs at shopping centers, mailroom and security guard jobs in office buildings, or food service jobs at stadiums; and are substantially inadequate to maintain a living. We must advocate on promoting and ensuring that the people of New York are fairly compensated.

Other cities such as Boston, Los Angeles and Chicago have all enacted similar legislation requiring living wages on many of their subsidized projects. These policies have created good jobs for low-income communities without slowing economic growth.

Clearly, as we move forward we must keep in mind that as the cost of living continues to rise, the Fair Wages Act serves as a buffer that is necessary to support our communities in times of economic hardships. If our communities thrive then we all will prosper in the long run and that is why the Black, Latino and Asian Caucus are in support of the Fair Wages Act.

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