



SPECIAL EDITION OF THE WORKERS VOICE

A LIVING WAGE

by Chris Furbert, BIU President

The Bermuda Government is proposing amendments to the work permit policies to address a Living Wage and Training requirements for Bermudians per the letter dated March 17, 2016 to end the protest. The timing of this proposal is long overdue particularly when you look at the wage disparity between Blacks, Whites and Others over the past 40 years.

SO WHAT IS A LIVING WAGE?

The following are excerpts taking from a number of different sources.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) in a report first published in 2011 Mr. Richard Anker a retired Senior Economist gave a, brief description of how a Living Wage is usually measured; *“The idea of a Living Wage is that workers and their families should be able to afford a basic, but decent, life style that is considered acceptable by society at its current level of economic development. Workers and their families should be able to live above the poverty level, and be able to participate in social and cultural life”.* (Mr. Richard Anker)

“There is widespread acceptance of the principal of Living Wage – the idea that full-time workers and their families should earn enough to afford a basic acceptable Living standard and so not have to live in poverty. Unfortunately, this principal is not implemented by many companies or NGOs, even those that accept the principal of a Living Wage.

Measurement and definitional problems of Living Wages are often cited to explain why a Living Wage is not paid. This implies, in my opinion, that unless measurement issues are addressed, achievement of a Living Wage for many workers in developing countries will remain a hard sell”. (Mr. Richard Anker)

“Original methodologies in high income countries are well-documented and transparent. This makes them easy to use and defend. For this reason, they are used by others without the time, expertise or funds to make solid estimates. In contrast, methodologies for developing countries are generally poorly documented, often based on ad hoc data decisions, and far from transparent. This is unfortunate, because companies and governments rightly need to feel that a Living Wage estimate is reasonable and solidly based. Poorly documented Living Wage estimates are not convincing, nor should they be. Developing country methodologies in the future would be well-advised to also be detailed, transparent and well-documented”. (Mr. Richard Anker)

The International Community and Living Wage as a Human Right

The international community clearly considers Living Wage as a human right (Table 1). The following international conventions and declarations recognize the need for workers to receive a living wage: United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1948), American Declaration on the Right and Duties of Man (Organization of American States, 1948), European Charter (Council of Europe, 1961), United Nations International Covenant on Economic and Social Cultural Rights (1966) and American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Additional Protocol (Organizations of American States, 1988). According to Article 23 of the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948).
(Mr. Richard Anker)

A Living wage is defined as the wage that can meet the basic needs to maintain a safe, decent standard of living within the community. (ref; from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia).

LIVING WAGE RESEARCH FOR KPMG.

In 2013 and 2014 KPMG commissioned Markit Economics to conduct a data analysis on the Living Wage, which draws together official hourly earnings figures and Markit's proprietary survey information on UK household Finances. The purpose to the research is twofold and outlined below by geographic region.

“In the first section of the research we provide an insight into the regional and job sector distribution of hourly earnings below the living Wage in the UK. In doing so, we highlight the ‘hot spots’ for the types the Living Wage and estimate the total number of people whose earnings are below the Living Wage both nationally and by geographic region.

“In the second section of the research, we present a unique overview of recent trends in household finances for those on either side of the Living Wage threshold. This survey information shines a light on the contrasting experiences of people earning above and below the Living Wage, and covers four broad themes; financial wellbeing, labour market sentiment, spending and cost on living trends”.

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Our campaign for living wages (Hospital Employees' Union British Columbia)

“HEU launched its Living Wage Campaign in 2007 in part to address the poverty wages and unsafe working conditions for health care workers employed by multinational corporations like Aramark, Sodexo and Compass. These corporations secured multimillion – dollar contracts-funded by taxpayers – to provide support services in many B.C. hospitals and long-term care homes”. “But they refused to pay their workers decent wages or benefits”.

“In our campaign for living wages, many of these workers became activists. And these raised awareness and built public support through presentations, petitions, letter-writing, and lobbying politicians”.

“Now we're part of a larger community-based campaign for living wage”.

Living Wage Campaign (Hospital Employees' Union British Columbia)

“Describes a Living Wage as “It’s a calculation – higher than the legal minimum wage – that enables families to meet their basic daily needs, such as food and shelter. But it also allows families to fully participate in their communities, escape poverty and severe financial stress, and ensure healthy child development”.

“Every British Columbian deserves to earn fair, family-supporting wages with benefits in order to live with dignity, self-respect and equality”.

HOW IS THE LIVING WAGE CALCULATED?

(Hospital Employees' Union British Columbia)

“The calculation is based on a family of four – with two adults working full-time and raising two young children – and factors in how much it costs for basic expenses like housing, food, clothing, child care and transportation. And it takes into account the cost of living in specific regions of the province. The living wage is a combination of monetary (hourly wage) and non-mandatory benefits (like employer-paid MSP premiums, extended health and dental coverage) that add together to make up the living wage rate”.

WHAT’S HAPPENING IN BRITISH COLUMBIA TODAY?

With a solid and growing foundation of support throughout the province, the Living Wage Campaign is receiving endorsements from several city councils and school boards.

In 2010, the City of New Westminster became the first to pass a Living Wage bylaw, which went into effect on January 1, 2011. Several similar initiatives are underway across the province. And in April 2012, School District 69 (Parksville/ Qualicum) became the first school district to implement a living wage policy for all staff, contracts and service providers.

There are currently 18 communities throughout B.C. that have calculated a Living Wage. And nearly 40 communities across Canada are participating in Living Wage initiatives, including Living Wage campaigns in Hamilton, Kingston, Calgary and Waterloo.

THE SCOTTISH LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN.

Our History

The original UK Living Wage campaign was launched in 2001 by parents in East London who were frustrated that working two minimum wage jobs left no time for family life. You can read more about the History of the UK wide campaign here.

The Living Wage Campaign was established in the autumn of 2007 following a conference organized by the Poverty Alliance in Glasgow.

In early 2014, the campaign was successful in ensuring that the Scottish Government made amendments to the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Bill to require local authorities to include the Living Wage as part of the evaluation process in procurement processes. Further to this, the campaign is involved in drafting the guidance notes for local authorities ensuring that they have clear guidance around the Bill.

POVERTY FREE ONTARIO.

Local Living Wage campaigns are starting to establish what the appropriate hourly rates for a Living Wage are in various communities across the province (e.g. \$15/hr in Hour [2010]; \$18/hr in Toronto Poverty Free Ontario supports community Living Wage campaigns, which set important benchmarks for an inclusive community that values and fairly compensates the labour of its workers.

The policy agenda in Ontario to eradicate poverty must ensure that all Ontarians both in and out of the workforce have livable incomes.

LIVING WAGE CANADA LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE.

The development of the Canadian Living Wage Framework, which was released in the spring of 2013, includes a consistent living wage definition, calculation methodology, and strategy for recognizing corporate and community leadership who commit to pass a living wage policy.

THE HUGE WAGE DISPARITY BETWEEN BLACKS WHITES AND OTHERS

Table 1 reflects the Average Annual Household Income for Black, White and Others. You will notice very concerning disparity in Income earned between Black, White and Others. **(this information is taken from the Household Expenditures Reports of 1993, 2004 and 2013).**

In 1982 Black Males earned \$32,650, while White & Other Males earned \$46,490 **a difference of \$13,840, or (40%) more than Black Males.**

In 1993 Black Males earned \$54,467, while White & Other Males earned \$97,636 **a difference of \$41,169, or (72%) more than Black Males.**

In 2004 Black Males earned \$90,401, while White & Other Males earned \$139,864 **a difference of \$49,463, or (54%) more than Black Males.**

In 2013 Black Males earned \$115,829, while White & Other Males earned \$192,305 **a difference of \$76,476, or (65%) more than Black Males.**

Table 1				
Average Annual Household Income Compared Black, White & Others				
	1982	1993	2004	2013
% increases from 1993 to 2013				
Black Male	\$ 32,650.00	\$ 56,467.00	\$ 90,401.00	\$ 115,829.00
% increases from 1993 to 2013				
White & Other Male	\$ 46,490.00	\$ 97,636.00	\$ 139,864.00	\$ 192,305.00
difference between White/Other Male	\$ (13,840.00)	\$ (41,169.00)	\$ (49,463.00)	\$ (76,476.00)
% increases from 1993 to 2013				
Black Female	\$ 20,960.00	\$ 43,892.00	\$ 85,385.00	\$ 107,493.00
% increases from 1993 to 2013				
White & Other Female	\$ 21,585.00	\$ 51,132.00	\$ 121,085.00	\$ 182,612.00
difference between White/Other Female	\$ (625.00)	\$ (7,240.00)	\$ (35,700.00)	\$ (75,119.00)

In 1982 Black Females earned \$20,960, while White & Other Females earned \$21,585 **a difference of \$625, or (3%) more than Black Females.**

In 1993 Black Females earned \$43,892, while White & Other Females earned \$51,132 **a difference of \$7,240, or (16.5%) more than Black Females.**

In 2004 Black Females earned \$85,385, while White & Other Females earned \$121,085 **a difference of \$35,700 or (42%) more than Black Females.**

In 2013 Black Females earned \$107,493, while White & Other Females earned \$182,612 **a difference of \$75,119, or (69.5%) more than Black Females.**

HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURE INCREASES FROM 1974 TO 2013

Table 2 reflects the changes in the Household Expenditure Survey Reports from 1974 to 2013. The information for 1974 and 1982 was collective from the Department of Statistics, while the information for 1993, 2004 and 2013 was taken right from those three reports produced by the Bermuda Government Department of Statistics.

Table 2										
The Household Expenditure Survey Reports - 1974, 1982, 1993, 2004 & 2013										
	1974		1982		1993		2004		2013	
Food & non-alcoholic beverages	51.54	23.93%	92.06	17.14%	141.83	14.58%	210.61	13.69%	229.33	12.69%
Alcoholic drink & tobacco	5.77	2.68%	12.95	2.41%	21.48	2.21%	29.19	1.90%	39.37	2.18%
Clothing & footwear	13.24	6.15%	31.29	5.83%	47.40	4.87%	56.13	3.65%	49.98	2.77%
Housing	44.35	20.59%	121.39	22.61%	269.23	27.67%	511.86	33.28%	519.57	28.75%
Fuel & power	9.64	4.48%	23.34	4.35%	32.54	3.34%	45.16	2.94%	75.21	4.16%
Household goods & services	28.11	13.05%	81.4	15.16%	161.94	16.64%	212.84	13.84%	195.40	10.81%
Transportation	16.54	7.68%	50.24	9.36%	71.27	7.32%	123.75	8.05%	116.82	6.46%
Education	5.40	2.51%	16.56	3.08%	37.46	3.85%	64.14	4.17%	85.63	4.74%
Foreign travel	12.72	5.91%	37.25	6.94%	58.11	5.97%	83.58	5.43%	97.82	5.41%
Medical, health & personal care	12.92	6.00%	33.94	6.32%	73.59	7.56%	133.06	8.65%	197.87	10.95%
Entertainment & recreation & Misc.	15.12	7.02%	36.56	6.81%	58.25	5.99%	67.61	4.40%	200.05	11.07%
Total Consumption	215.35	100.00%	536.98	100.00%	973.10	100.00%	1,537.93	100.00%	1,807.05	100.00%
Increase in Consumption Cost			321.63		436.12		564.83		269.12	
Average increase per week for each period			35.74		39.65		51.35		29.90	

There are 4 Household Expenditure Items that have increased by more than 1000% between 1974 and 2013.

1. Education in 1974 was \$5.40 and in 2013 it was \$85.63 an increase of \$80.23 or **1,485%**
2. Medical, Health & Personal Care in 1974 was \$12.92 and in 2013 it was \$197.87 an increase of \$184.95 or **1,430%**
3. Entertainment & Recreational & Misc. in 1974 was \$15.12 and in 2013 it was \$200.05 an increase of \$184.93 or **1,225%**
4. Housing in 1974 was \$44.35 and in 2013 it was \$519.57 an increase of \$475.22 or **1,070%**

HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURE INCREASES IN TOTAL CONSUMPTION FROM 1974 –2013

Table 3 reflects the wages of a Public Works Employee when compared to the Household Expenditure Survey Reports from 1974 to 2013 total consumption. Please note the changes over this period of time.

Table 3 Household Expenditure Survey Reports 1974 - 2013 (TOTAL CONSUMPTION) Compared to the Wages of a Public Works Employee over the same period				
YEAR	1974			
	Per Week	Monthly	Yearly	disposal income
Total Consumption	\$ 215.35	\$ 933.18	\$ 11,198.20	
Public Works Employee	\$ 226.00	\$ 979.33	\$ 11,752.00	
	\$ 10.65	\$ 46.15	\$ 553.80	5%
YEAR	1982			
	Per Week	Monthly	Yearly	disposal income
Total Consumption	\$ 536.98	\$ 2,326.91	\$ 27,922.96	
Public Works Employee	\$ 298.00	\$ 1,291.33	\$ 15,496.00	
	\$ (238.98)	\$ (1,035.58)	\$ (12,426.96)	-45%
YEAR	1993			
	Per Week	Monthly	Yearly	disposal income
Total Consumption	\$ 973.10	\$ 4,216.77	\$ 50,601.20	
Public Works Employee	\$ 700.00	\$ 3,033.33	\$ 36,400.00	
	\$ (273.10)	\$ (1,183.43)	\$ (14,201.20)	-28%
YEAR	2004			
	Per Week	Monthly	Yearly	disposal income
Total Consumption	\$ 1,537.93	\$ 6,664.36	\$ 79,972.36	
Public Works Employee	\$ 1,015.00	\$ 4,398.33	\$ 52,780.00	
	\$ (522.93)	\$ (2,266.03)	\$ (27,192.36)	-34%
YEAR	2013			
	Per Week	Monthly	Yearly	disposal income
Total Consumption	\$ 1,807.05	\$ 7,830.55	\$ 93,966.60	
Public Works Employee	\$ 1,275.00	\$ 5,525.00	\$ 66,300.00	
	\$ (532.05)	\$ (2,305.55)	\$ (27,666.60)	-29%

In 1974 the Public Works Employee had a plus 5% disposal income. You should have noticed that the Employees disposal income is now minus 29% in 2013. The Employees wage has increased by 465% from 1974 to 2013, while total consumption has increased by 740% over this period.

HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURE INCREASES IN HOUSING FROM 1974 – 2013

Table 4 reflects the wages of a Public Works Employee when compared to the Household Expenditure Survey Reports from 1974 to 2013 **HOUSING ONLY**. Please note the changes over this period of time.

Table 4				
Household Expenditure Survey Reports 1974 - 2013 (HOUSING ONLY)				
Compared to the Wages of a Public Works Employee over the same period				
YEAR	1974			
	Per Week	Monthly	Yearly	disposal income
Housing	\$ 44.35	\$ 192.18	\$ 2,306.20	
Public Works Employee	\$ 226.00	\$ 979.33	\$ 11,752.00	80%
Wage % that goes towards Rent	20%	20%	20%	
YEAR	1982			
	Per Week	Monthly	Yearly	disposal income
Housing	\$ 121.39	\$ 526.02	\$ 6,312.28	
Public Works Employee	\$ 298.00	\$ 1,291.33	\$ 15,496.00	59%
Wage % that goes towards Rent	41%	41%	41%	
YEAR	1993			
	Per Week	Monthly	Yearly	disposal income
Housing	\$ 269.23	\$ 1,166.66	\$ 13,999.96	
Public Works Employee	\$ 700.00	\$ 3,033.33	\$ 36,400.00	62%
Wage % that goes towards Rent	38%	38%	38%	
YEAR	2004			
	Per Week	Monthly	Yearly	disposal income
Housing	\$ 511.86	\$ 2,218.06	\$ 26,616.72	
Public Works Employee	\$ 1,015.00	\$ 4,398.33	\$ 52,780.00	50%
Wage % that goes towards Rent	50%	50%	50%	
YEAR	2013			
	Per Week	Monthly	Yearly	disposal income
Housing	\$ 519.57	\$ 2,251.47	\$ 27,017.64	
Public Works Employee	\$ 1,275.00	\$ 5,525.00	\$ 66,300.00	59%
Wage % that goes towards Rent	41%	41%	41%	

In 1974 the Public Works Employee had 20% of his earned income that went towards his rent. You should have noticed that 41% of his earned income now goes towards his rent in 2013. The Employee's wage has increased by 465% from 1974 to 2013, while Housing has increased by 1,070% over this period.

THIS SECTION WILL LOOK AT THE INCREASES IN FOOD PRICES FROM 2004 TO 2013

Table 5 shows the increase in food prices from 2004 to 2013.
(this information is taken from the Bermuda Digest of Statistics 2013 and 2015).

Table 5				
INCREASE IN FOOD PRICES FROM 2004 TO 2013				
	2004	2013	increase	% change
Grain and Grain Products:				
Bread, 22 oz. sandwich loaf white local	\$ 3.33	\$ 5.68	\$ 2.35	71%
Flour, 5 lbs.	\$ 2.98	\$ 5.54	\$ 2.56	86%
Cornflakes, 12 ozs.	\$ 3.54	\$ 5.16	\$ 1.62	46%
Rice, 3 lbs.	\$ 3.45	\$ 6.39	\$ 2.94	85%
Meat, Poultry and Fish:				
Leg of Lamb, per lb. with bone, frozen	\$ 3.56	\$ 6.79	\$ 3.23	91%
Hamburger	\$ 3.00	\$ 4.15	\$ 1.15	38%
Chicken legs 5lbs.	\$ 6.04	\$ 12.64	\$ 6.60	109%
Fish per lb. imported cod fish	\$ 9.43	\$ 9.11	\$ (0.32)	-3%
Dairy Products and Substitutes:				
Butter, 1lb. Pkg.	\$ 2.32	\$ 4.59	\$ 2.27	98%
Cheese, 16 ozs. (block)	\$ 2.75	\$ 6.74	\$ 3.99	145%
Milk, fresh per 1/2 gal.	\$ 3.80	\$ 5.32	\$ 1.52	40%
Eggs, 1 doz, large domestic	\$ 2.72	\$ 4.75	\$ 2.03	75%
Sugar 2kg. Bag white granulated	\$ 2.05	\$ 3.85	\$ 1.80	88%
Fats and Cooking Oils:				
Cooking oil 32 fl. oz.	\$ 3.68	\$ 7.54	\$ 3.86	105%
Vegetable shortening 3 lb. tin	\$ 5.43	\$ 8.84	\$ 3.41	63%
Fruits and Vegetables:				
Potatoes, 5 lb. bag (Bermuda)	\$ 4.94	\$ 6.10	\$ 1.16	23%
Beans, french style, frozen, 10 ozs.	\$ 1.76	\$ 3.42	\$ 1.66	94%

THIS SECTION WILL LOOK AT THE INCREASES IN FOOD PRICES FROM 2004 TO 2013

Table 6 shows the increase in food prices from 2004 to 2013.
(this information is taken from the Bermuda Digest of Statistics 2013 and 2015).

Table 6				
INCREASE IN FOOD PRICES FROM 2004 TO 2013				
	2004	2013	increase	% change
Beverages:				
Coffee, 12 oz. (instant)	\$ 8.05	\$ 10.02	\$ 1.97	24%
Tea, 50 bags	\$ 3.89	\$ 4.35	\$ 0.46	12%
Miscellaneous				
Salt, 1 kg. box	\$ 1.67	\$ 2.29	\$ 0.62	37%
Mayonnaise, 32 oz. bottle	\$ 4.24	\$ 6.73	\$ 2.49	59%
Household and Personal				
Soap, bath size tablet	\$ 1.96	\$ 3.52	\$ 1.56	80%
Washing Powder, 26 oz. pack (49 oz. pack)	\$ 5.79	\$ 6.82	\$ 1.03	18%
Haircut (men)	\$ 18.33	\$ 22.75	\$ 4.42	24%
Haircut, shampoo, raise and set (women)	\$ 71.00	\$ 86.90	\$ 15.90	22%
Drycleaning 2- piece suit men's	\$ 22.30	\$ 35.68	\$ 13.38	60%
Shoe repairs 1/2 sole and heeling men's shoes	\$ 34.00	\$ 52.50	\$ 18.50	54%
Fuel and Power				
Electricity per mth. 560 kw hours (BEL. CO)	\$ 140.00	\$ 293.88	\$ 153.88	110%
Gas (cost of one cylinder)	\$ 104.55	\$ 157.75	\$ 53.20	51%
Transportation				
Cash Bus Fare (St. Georges to Somerset)	\$ 4.50	\$ 4.50	\$ -	0%
Cash Ferry Fare (Hamilton to Somerset)	\$ 4.00	\$ 4.00	\$ -	0%
Taxi fare - 5 mile journey	\$ 11.52	\$ 15.40	\$ 3.88	34%

What table 5 & 6 has just proven is that the cost of Food and Fuel & Power continued to rise during the recession while workers were either Out of Work, Laid Off, Shorter Work Week, Wage Freeze, Furlough Days etc; this has seriously affected their quality of life as it relates to their disposal income.

THIS SECTION WILL LOOK AT THE INCREASES IN FOOD PRICES FROM 2013 TO 2014

Table 7 shows the increase in food prices for one year 2013 to 2014.
(this information is taken from the Bermuda Digest of Statistics 2015).

Table 7				
INCREASE IN FOOD PRICES FROM 2013 TO 2014				
	2013	2014	increase	% change
Grain and Grain Products:				
Bread, 22 oz. sandwich loaf white local	\$ 5.68	\$ 5.88	\$ 0.20	4%
Flour, 5 lbs.	\$ 5.54	\$ 5.56	\$ 0.02	0%
Cornflakes, 12 ozs.	\$ 5.16	\$ 5.39	\$ 0.23	4%
Rice, 3 lbs.	\$ 6.39	\$ 6.88	\$ 0.49	8%
Meat, Poultry and Fish:				
Leg of Lamb, per lb. with bone, frozen	\$ 6.79	\$ 6.71	\$ (0.08)	-1%
Hamburger	\$ 4.15	\$ 4.08	\$ (0.07)	-2%
Chicken legs 5lbs.	\$ 12.64	\$ 14.47	\$ 1.83	14%
Fish per lb. imported cod fish	\$ 9.11	\$ 8.71	\$ (0.40)	-4%
Dairy Products and Substitutes:				
Butter, 1lb. Pkg.	\$ 4.59	\$ 5.19	\$ 0.60	13%
Cheese, 16 ozs. (block)	\$ 6.74	\$ 6.96	\$ 0.22	3%
Milk, fresh per 1/2 gal.	\$ 5.32	\$ 5.30	\$ (0.02)	0%
Eggs, 1 doz, large domestic	\$ 4.75	\$ 4.44	\$ (0.31)	-7%
Sugar 2kg. Bag white granulated	\$ 3.85	\$ 3.77	\$ (0.08)	-2%
Fats and Cooking Oils:				
Cooking oil 32 fl. oz.	\$ 7.54	\$ 7.23	\$ (0.31)	-4%
Vegetable shortening 3 lb. tin	\$ 8.84	\$ 8.98	\$ 0.14	2%
Fruits and Vegetables:				
Potatoes, 5 lb. bag (Bermuda)	\$ 6.10	\$ 6.33	\$.23	4%
Beans, french style, frozen, 10 ozs.	\$ 3.42	\$ 3.55	\$.13	4%

THIS SECTION WILL LOOK AT THE INCREASES IN FOOD PRICES FROM 2013 TO 2014

Table 8 shows the increase in food prices for one year 2013 to 2014.
(this information is taken from the Bermuda Digest of Statistics 2015).

Table 8				
INCREASE IN FOOD PRICES FROM 2013 TO 2014				
	2013	2014	increase	% change
Beverages:				
Coffee, 12 oz. (instant)	\$ 10.02	\$ 9.71	\$ (0.31)	-3%
Tea, 50 bags	\$ 4.35	\$ 4.47	\$ 0.12	3%
Miscellaneous				
Salt, 1 kg. box	\$ 2.29	\$ 2.08	\$ (0.21)	-9%
Mayonnaise, 32 oz. bottle	\$ 6.73	\$ 6.96	\$ 0.23	3%
Household and Personal				
Soap, bath size tablet	\$ 3.52	\$ 3.54	\$ 0.02	1%
Washing Powder, 26 oz. pack (49 oz. pack)	\$ 6.82	\$ 7.06	\$ 0.24	4%
Haircut (men)	\$ 22.75	\$ 22.75	\$ -	0%
Haircut, shampoo, raise and set (women)	\$ 86.90	\$ 86.90	\$ -	0%
Drycleaning 2- piece suit men's	\$ 35.68	\$ 35.68	\$ -	0%
Shoe repairs 1/2 sole and heeling men's shoes	\$ 52.50	\$ 52.50	\$ -	0%
Fuel and Power				
Electricity per mth. 560 kw hours (BEL. CO)	\$ 293.88	\$ 276.38	\$ (17.50)	-6%
Gas (cost of one cylinder)	\$ 157.75	\$ 157.75	\$ -	0%
Transportation				
Cash Bus Fare (St. Georges to Somerset)	\$ 4.50	\$ 4.50	\$ -	0%
Cash Ferry Fare (Hamilton to Somerset)	\$ 4.00	\$ 4.00	\$ -	0%
Taxi fare - 5 mile journey	\$ 15.40	\$ 17.65	\$ 2.25	14.5%

CONCLUSION

A Living Wage is considered a Human Right by the International Community of Nations.

A Living Wage should be sufficient to support a basic standard of living that is considered decent for a specific time and place. Several descriptions for developing countries mentioned basic needs. The acceptable basic standard, however, increases with economic development.

A Living standard supported by a Living Wage should provide for more than just the necessities of life (food, shelter and clothing). Some descriptions, for example, refer to health care, education, transportation and recreation; other refers to the need for savings or some discretionary income.

A Living Wage is a family concept. A worker should be able to support a family on a Living Wage.

Research has showed that there are many countries around the world that are exploring ALL aspects of a Living Wage (Livable Wage). Some of the *“Living Wage Campaigns have already delivered tangible improvements for thousands of low –paid workers. Yet the organizations that have made the voluntary decision to implement a living wage remain few in number and are confined to a relatively narrow range sectors. Recent reductions in tax credits mean that wage growth will be more crucial than ever in maintaining the living standards of low-to-middle income households. In this context it is right that, where possible, employers pay their low-paid staff a living wage”.* **(taken from a report produced by Institute for Public Policy Research IPPR)**

Popes agree that a Living Wage should be sufficient for a single earner in the family to be able to support his family. Pope John Paul 11 says *“a family wage – that is a single salary given to head of the family for his work, sufficient for needs of the family without the other spouse having to take up gainful employment outside the home”.* The Catholic Church supports what it considers appropriate gender roles, where husbands go out to work to earn income and wives stay home to take care of the home and children.

“A living wage is not transfer of wealth from the rich to the poor, it’s an investment every community needs to empower dignity and the poor will benefit — it will raise their opportunity and raise their potential.” **(Lord Hastings RG article May 20, 2016)**

“We have to change the paradigm. We also have to change the view that the money isn’t available. The one per cent now control more wealth that the 99 per cent put together.” **(Lord Hastings RG article May 20, 2016)**

It should be very obvious that the quality of life in Bermuda for the middle class and Low class has been held at a complete disadvantage when it comes to the wages/salaries that they earned when compared to that of whites and others. Therefore the disparity in wages between Blacks and White & others needs to be addressed.

Now that the Bermuda Government has decided to address the Living Wage for Bermuda I certainly hope that ALL stakeholders will participate in the process. Therefore I look forward to making sure that Bermuda as a country will start to address the imbalance in the wage earnings between Blacks, Whites and Others.



UNION CORNER Magic 102.7 FM

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