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Kankee Briefs

Resolved: The United States ought to require that workers receive a living wage.

## Letter From The Editor

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## Affirmative

### AT: Race Pay Gap

#### Can’t solve – unemployment for black folk is ridiculously high

Austin 21 [Algernon Austin, Senior Researcher at the Thurgood Marshall Institute, 2021, “Ending Black America's Permanent Economic Recession: Direct and Indirect Job Creation and Affirmative Action Are Necessary,” Minnesota Journal of Law & Inequality, https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/lieq39&i=255]/Kankee

I. The Permanent Recession in Black America In 1963, the Black unemployment rate was 2.2 times the White rate. 12 In 2019, the Black unemployment rate was 1.85 times the White rate.1 3 For all of the years in between these two dates, the Black unemployment rate has been about twice the White unemployment rate. 14 Having an unemployment rate twice the White unemployment rate puts African Americans at a level of unemployment typical for economic recessions. To get a sense of what we should consider a low and a high unemployment rate, we can note that in the wake of the 1969 recession, the national quarterly15 unemployment rate peaked at 6.0 percent.16 In the wake of the 2001 recession, the quarterly unemployment rate peaked at 6.2 percent. 17 An unemployment rate of 6.0 percent or higher is not a desirable rate. While I see a 6.0 percent unemployment rate as a good place to mark the beginning of a high unemployment rate, the country has experienced much higher rates recently. The national quarterly unemployment rate after the Great Recession peaked at 9.9 percent.1 8 The Great Recession was called "Great" because, at the time, it was the worst economic downturn that the country had experienced since the Great Depression. 19 An unemployment rate around 10.0 percent therefore should be considered a very high unemployment rate. With the COVID-19 recession, the national quarterly unemployment rate peaked at 13.0 percent. 20 Of course, this rate is worse still. The quarterly unemployment data for African Americans from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics begins in 1972. From 1972 to the third quarter of 2020, the median quarterly unemployment rate for African Americans was 11.3 percent.2 1 This is not merely a high unemployment rate; it is very high. It is significantly higher than the post-Great Recession national peak rate of 9.9 percent. Because it is the median rate, we know that half of the time, African Americans experience rates of unemployment above 11.3 percent. The Black unemployment rate peaked in the 1980s at around 20 percent. 22 That is the upper half of the Black unemployment rate distribution, but what about the lower half? How low does the Black unemployment rate typically go? The lowest Black unemployment rate from 1972 to 2020 was 5.6 percent (Figure 1)-close to the peak national rate of 6.0 percent after the 1969 recession. In other words, the lowest Black unemployment rate on record is still a rate that one might associate with a recession. It is for this reason that one can say African Americans live in a permanent recession. In terms of unemployment, Black Americans live in a labor market that feels like it is swinging from mild recessions to severe ones and never reaching a truly healthy low rate of unemployment. Let us contrast the range of Black unemployment rates with the range for White workers. After the 1969 recession, the White unemployment rate peaked at 5.5 percent.23 After the 2001 recession, the White unemployment rate peaked at 5.4 percent (Figure 1). These peaks are below the lowest Black unemployment rate since 1972.

### AT: Cap K

#### The aff’s discourse is pedagogically valuable for countering class relations

Milanovic 22 [Branko Milanovic, research professor at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York and an affiliated senior scholar at the Luxembourg Income Study, 2-14-2022, "Marx on Income Inequality Under Capitalism,” Global Policy Journal, https://www.globalpolicyjournal.com/blog/14/02/2022/marx-income-inequality-under-capitalism]/Kankee

The third ground for unconcern is more philosophical. Hired labor implies alienation of the worker from the meaning and product of his work. If the fundamental issue is alienation, it cannot be overcome by mere improvements in the distribution of income. As a hired worker in Amazon, I am as alienated from my work at Amazon whether my wage is $10 per hour or $50 per hour. To transcend alienation both private property and the division of labor have to be abolished. All of these grounds lead to the rejection of the salience of inequality as such under capitalism. How is it then that trade union activity, or social activism in general, is justified if the improvements in the material conditions of workers cannot be the ultimate objective of a Marxist-inspired movement operating under capitalist conditions? Here, Marx takes a very different stance from the usual social-democratic. The struggle for the increase in wages, the shortening of the working week, lower intensity of work etc. are all valuable because they highlight the antagonistic nature of capitalist relations and, more importantly, because the joint work and unity of purpose implicit in social activism create bonds that presage the future society of collaboration and even of altruism. As Shlomo Avineri writes: “[Workers’ association] does not have a narrowly political, nor a trade union significance: it is the real constructive effort to create the social texture of future human relations” (The social and political thought of Karl Marx, p. 142). The primary objective of such social activism is…pedagogical: the learning of social cooperation, and only secondarily, the improvement in the economic conditions of the working class—or any other group whose interests are thus promoted: gender, race or ethnicity. (One can even go further and say that such social activism is the essence of praxis: “man’s conscious shaping of the changing historical conditions” (Kolakowski, vol. 1, p. 138)). For all these reasons, a student of income distribution, in the current sense of the term, or the social activist who proposes one or another meliorative measure, is involved into something that, from Marx’s perspective, while not useless, as it makes the underlying contradictory class interests more apparent, fundamentally does little to move the reality of life under capitalism towards the creation of just “background institutions.”

#### Living wage rights recognition is key to counteract capitalism

Manchego 24 [Isaac Manchego, Law Clerk at the Hennepin County Public Defender's Office with a Bachelor’s in Legal Studies from the University of Maryland, 04-23-2024, “Abolition and a Guaranteed Living Wage,” SSRN, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\_id=4805200]/Kankee

Abstract A living wage is a fundamental right, crucial for preserving human dignity. This paper explores how economic, legal, and historical factors shape living wage policies and were crafted to exclude non-white and non-heterosexuals from the fundamental right to enjoy. Recognizing a living wage as a human right is essential for addressing economic disparities and ensuring reparations, a repair of a broken system of economic disparity. The refusal to accept the minimum wage as status quo and advocate for a guaranteed living wage, unconnected from work or labor but considers pleasure just as valuable, is a rejection of capitalism’s categorization of class stratification and a challenge to that pillar of oppression. The evolution from viewing work as unpaid toil to recognizing labor as remunerated toil signifies progress, yet dismantling systemic constructs necessitates acknowledging pleasure as equally essential to human life and the Black being. The labor movement’s fraught history was an existential struggle for many Black people, especially Black women, and domestic workers. This struggle against legislation, executive actions, and judicial interpretations reveals pervasive systemic barriers faced by Black individuals, particularly in creating the conditions for poverty to proliferate, given the roles of Congress and the Court in determining a living wage. From Work to Labor to Pleasure

### AT: Price DA

#### No impact – price increases are ridiculously small

Renkin et al. 20 [Tobias Renkin, Senior Economist in the Research Unit of Danmarks Nationalbank with a PhD in economics from the University of Zurich, Claire Montialoux, Assistant Professor of Economics at Sciences Po Paris and CNRS with a PhD in economics at CREST, Michael Siegenthaler, head of the labor market section at KOF Swiss Economic Institute at ETH Zurich with a PhD from ETH Zurich, 09-25-2020, “The Pass-through of Minimum Wages into US Retail Prices: Evidence from Supermarket Scanner Data,” Goldman School of Public Policy, https://gspp.berkeley.edu/assets/uploads/research/pdf/The\_Pass-Through\_of\_Minimum\_Wages\_into\_US\_Retail\_Price.pdf]/Kankee

In this paper, we study the pass-through of minimum wages increases into prices in the US. We exploit a large number of changes in the minimum wage between 2001 and 2012 and leverage scanner-level data from weekly price observations of 2,500 distinct grocery and drug stores. We make three main contributions. First, we provide new evidence on how minimum wages affect prices in the grocery sector, which had not been previously studied in the literature.1 The grocery sector is especially important because the share of minimum wage labor costs in groceries’ marginal cost is sizable, and because groceries make up a large share of consumer expenditure, up to 15% for low-income households. Second, we take advantage of the high frequency of scanner data to study the dynamics of the price response over time. Since minimum wage laws are usually passed several months before implementation and typically set a schedule of increases rather than one-off hikes, firms may increase prices in anticipation of higher future minimum wages. We use a newly collected dataset with legislation dates for every minimum wage increase in our sample period and we find strong evidence for anticipation effects. Third, we use a large consumer panel data linked to the store-level information to investigate how the price response varies across household income groups. This allows us to better understand the implications of minimum wage changes for real incomes. Our main finding is that there is a full pass-through of minimum wage increases into grocery prices. Our main research design compares monthly price movements across states exploiting time variation in state-level minimum wage hikes. We supplement this approach by using a second identification strategy that exploits within-state variation in the bite of the hikes. We find that a 10% minimum wage hike translates into a 0.36% increase in grocery prices. Importantly, there is no statistically significant difference between the average price elasticity of 0.036 and our estimate of the minimum wage elasticity of groceries’ costs, which suggests a full pass-through of minimum wage cost increases into prices. We do not find evidence that the demand for grocery products changes, nor do we find evidence that stores reduce employment. Taken together, these results suggest that consumers, rather than firm-owners or workers, bear the bulk of the burden of minimum wage increases in the grocery sector. Another important finding of this paper, with implications for macroeconomic models, is that price adjustments occur mostly in the three months following the passage of a minimum wage legislation, rather than after implementation. In other words, grocery and drug stores appear to be forward-looking in their pricing decisions. Using Google Trends data, we show that the legislation of minimum wage increases represents a very salient event in the public. Based on flexible event study regressions tracking prices around the months in which minimum wage hikes are legislated, we find that grocery stores respond to future cost increases by increasing prices months before the minimum wage is actually implemented. This type of forward-looking behavior of firms is qualitatively consistent with the predictions of purely rational models, where firms think about the future as well as the present (i.e. they are not myopic). The rise in prices occurs mostly through an increase in the frequency of price changes. Last, we quantify the welfare consequences of minimum wage hikes after accounting for our estimated pass-through of minimum wages into prices. We estimate that the price effects of minimum wage increases are similar for goods usually consumed by low-income and high-income households. Low-income households are nevertheless disproportionately affected by the rise in grocery prices since a larger share of their expenditures is on groceries. The rise in grocery store prices following a $1 minimum wage increase reduces real income by about $19 a year for households earning less than $10,000 a year, and by about $63 a year for those earning more than $150,000. The price increases in grocery stores offset only a relatively small part of the gains of minimum wage hikes. Minimum wage policies thus remain a redistributive tool even after accounting for price effects in grocery stores. This paper contributes to a body of work in labor economics and macroeconomics.

#### Wage increases have almost zero effect on prices

Ganapati and Weaver 17 [Sharat Ganapati, Assistant Professor of International Economics at Georgetown University with a Ph.D in economics at Yale University, and Jeffrey Weaver, assistant professor in the economics department at USC, 03-2017, Minimum Wage and Retail Price Pass-through: Evidence and Estimates from Consumption Data,” SSRN, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\_id=2968143]/Kankee

We then check for heterogeneous responses to minimum wage increases. It is possible that firms find it too costly to reorganize production or change prices in response to typical, small changes in minimum wage, but will respond to larger changes. While the changes in our data are relatively small in comparison to some recently proposed changes, we do observe increases of up to 35% of the previously prevailing minimum wage. We test for differential responses across a number of cutoffs and find no evidence for heterogeneity in price response based on the size of the increase. We also compute the incidence of the minimum wage increase across different income categories, as demand-driven price increases would more significantly affect poorer households. We find that pass-through for items purchased by lower-income households is not significantly different from pass-through for higher income households. Third, we determine the effect of higher minimum wages on overall labor costs in the grocery sector, and compare this to the estimated price effects to detect the extent of price pass-through. The only existing estimates of price pass-through of minimum wage come from restaurants (e.g. Aaronson (2001); Aaronson et al. (2008)), in which minimum wage labor is a much larger fraction of the workforce than most industries and margins may be particularly low. As a result, the passthrough from that sector is likely much larger than in the rest of the economy. Our data suggest that the increase in labor costs is so small that even if fully passed on to consumers of grocery stores/wholesale clubs, price effects would be nearly indistinguishable from zero. We also look at how minimum wage increases affect labor costs in other sectors of the economy and find small effects outside of the restaurant/fast food sectors. Combining the estimated effect on labor costs with the cost share of labor in those industries, this implies that minimum wage increases will have almost no effect on prices in most sectors, no more than very small effects in the retail sector, and small effects in the restaurant/fast food sector. 2 Related Literature

#### Recent examples prove price hike arguments aren’t true

Machado 24 [Elisha Machado, anchor/multimedia journalist with a BS in journalism from Boston University, 4-1-2024, "How California's fast food minimum wage increase could impact menu prices", abc10, https://www.abc10.com/article/news/local/california/how-californias-minimum-wage-increase-menu-prices/103-c717efe9-0c83-406b-8eb1-b296cc9a4405]/Kankee

Researchers and the Service Employees International Union, the union leading the effort with fast food workers, addressed the topic at a Monday news conference. "California businesses can absorb this increase in the minimum wage without increasing prices and without having to impact employment," said Ali Bustamante, with the Roosevelt Institute. "A 10 cent increase in a burger, consumers will say, 'Oh gee, it's $5.10 instead of $5,' but they're not going to change their behavior," said Berkeley Dept. of Economics Professor Emeritus Michael Reich. Paul Leigh, a professor emeritus from UC Davis’ Department of Public Health Sciences, has studied the impacts of minimum wages on public health. He agrees the wage increase will have minimal effects on employment and that big chains, like McDonald's, can afford to pay workers more. But he said consumers should expect to see price increases. "The best estimate is about a 5% increase in consumer prices, however the economic research hasn't really looked at this significant increase from $16 to $20 an hour. I would say that, at the outside, we may have a 10% increase in prices," Leigh said. In a statement, Starbucks said they plan to offset the minimum wage increase by changing prices. McDonald's doesn't anticipate a uniform price change, but said franchise and corporate-owned locations will make modifications to their menus.

### AT: Employment Loss

#### Best studies prove no employment loss

Cengiz et al. 21 [Doruk Cengiz, data scientist at OMP with a Ph.D. in Economics and a M.S. in Statistics from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Arindrajit Dube, Provost Professor of Economics University of Massachusetts Amherst, Attila S. Lindner, Assistant Professor at the University College London, and David Zentler-Munro, Assistant Professor at the Department of Economics, University of Essex, 01-2021, “SEEING BEYOND THE TREES: USING MACHINE LEARNING TO ESTIMATE THE IMPACT OF MINIMUM WAGES ON LABOR MARKET OUTCOMES NBER, https://www.nber.org/system/files/working\_papers/w28399/w28399.pdf]/Kankee

The best performing prediction comes from the gradient boosting tree model. At the same time, it is worth pointing out that the original linear prediction model proposed by Card and Krueger (1995) (with a judiciously chosen set of interactions) also performs relatively well, although a little worse than the state-of-the-art machine learning tools. When compared to a commonly used demographic groups in the literature (such as teens, or high school or less under the age of 30), the boosting approach can form groups with a similar number of (correctly classified) minimum wage workers while substantially reducing the number of (mis-classified) non-minimum wage workers. The gains in precision (i.e. the correctly classified share) for a given level of recall (i.e. share of minimum wage workers included in the group) is sizable when we limit attention to non-teen workers—a group that is of particular interest to policymakers. Armed with the prediction model, we implement an event study analysis that exploits 172 prominent state-level minimum wage increases between 1979 and 2019. We assess the impact of the policy on various groups formed based on the predicted exposure probability. The “highprobability” group comprises 10% of the population with the highest likelihood of being affected by the policy. We also study the impact of the policy on the high-recall group that captures 75% of all minimum wage workers. For both groups, we find a considerable increase in wages after the policy change though the wage increase is somewhat lower for the high-recall group. At the same time, we detect a small, positive, and statistically insignificant effect on employment for both groups. The implied employment elasticity with respect to own wage—the labor demand elasticity in the standard competitive model of the labor market —is 0.28 (s.e. 0.34) for the high-probability group and 0.18 (s.e. 0.22) for the high-recall group. Both of these estimates can rule out anything more than modest negative disemployment effects at the conventional significance levels. At the same time, there is no evidence of substantial changes in the unemployment or participation rates in response to the policy. We are also not able to detect any economically meaningful (or statistically significant) changes in labor market transitions between employment, unemployment and non-participation. This lack of response on the labor-force participation margin provides new evidence that minimum wages have a limited impact on search effort when we focus on most individuals affected by the policy. Our results are robust to controlling for time-varying heterogeneity in a wide variety of ways. Moreover, the increase in wages lines up well with the timing of the minimum wage increases, and the effects only emerge in the group of individuals likely to be exposed to the minimum wage. We find no significant differences in labor market outcomes for the low-probability group suggesting that no unusual changes took place around the minimum wage hikes. All these findings underline the credibility of our research design. Furthermore, we also study whether the responses to the policy vary across demographic groups. Most importantly, we study whether differential responses can be detected on employment, unemployment, and participation margins for workers who are thought to have larger extensive margin labor supply elasticities—such as teens, older workers, and single mothers. In addition, we also assess the impact of the policy by the likelihood of moving in our out from the labor force. We use demographic information and apply machine learning tools again to classify workers as being more likely to move in and out from the labor force. Even when we focus on the group of workers with the highest predicted transition probabilities, we find no evidence of substantial change in the eemployment or participation rates. This paper contributes to several strands of the minimum wage literature. Although there is a thick literature on the minimum wage, there are only a handful of studies that examine large segments of affected workers in the U.S.5 Notable exceptions are Cengiz et al. (2019) who use the frequency distribution of wages to focus on the number of low-wage jobs, and Meer and West (2015) who simply consider total state-level employment to study the overall impact of the policy. Our estimates on the high-recall group complement the existing evidence by providing an alternative way of assessing the impact of the minimum wage on overall employment

#### California employment numbers for recent wage hike are made up – employment actually increased

Hiltzik 24 [Michael Hiltzik, journalist with a MS from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, 6-12-2024, "The fast-food industry claims the California minimum wage law is costing jobs. Its numbers are fake", Los Angeles Times, https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2024-06-12/the-fast-food-industry-claims-the-california-minimum-wage-law-is-costing-jobs-its-numbers-are-fake

\*also answers Ohanian card

The ad listed a dozen chains, from Pizza Hut to Cinnabon, whose local franchisees had cut employment or raised prices, or are considering taking those steps. According to the ad, the chains were “victims of Newsom’s minimum wage,” which increased the minimum wage in fast food to $20 from $16, starting April 1. Here’s something you might want to know about this claim. It’s baloney, sliced thick. In fact, from September through January, the period covered by the ad, fast-food employment in California has gone up, as tracked by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Federal Reserve. The claim that it has fallen represents a flagrant misrepresentation of government employment figures. Something else the ad doesn’t tell you is that after January, fast-food employment continued to rise. As of April, employment in the limited-service restaurant sector that includes fast-food establishments was higher by nearly 7,000 jobs than it was in April 2023, months before Newsom signed the minimum wage bill. Despite that, the job-loss figure and finger-pointing at the minimum wage law have rocketed around the business press and conservative media, from the Wall Street Journal to the New York Post to the website of the conservative Hoover Institution. We’ll be taking a closer look at the corporate lobbyist sleight-of-hand that makes job gains look like job losses. But first, a quick trot around the fast-food economic landscape generally. Few would argue that the restaurant business is easy, whether we’re talking about high-end sit-down dining, kiosks and food trucks, or franchised fast-food chains. The cost of labor is among the many expenses that owners have to deal with, but in recent years far from the worst. That would be inflation in the cost of food. Newport Beach-based Chipotle Mexican Grill, for example, disclosed in its most recent annual report that food, beverages and packaging cost it $2.9 billion last year, up from $2.6 billion in 2022 — though those costs declined as a share of revenue to 29.5% from 30.1%. Labor costs in 2023 came to $2.4 billion, but fell to 24.7% of revenue from 25.5% in 2022. At Costa Mesa-based El Pollo Loco, labor and related costs fell last year by $3.5 million, or 2.7%, despite an increase of $4.1 million that the company attributed to higher minimum wages enacted in the past as well as “competitive pressure” — in other words, the necessity of paying more to attract employees in a tight labor market. Then there’s Rubio’s Coastal Grill. On June 3 the Carlsbad chain confirmed that it had closed 48 of its California restaurants, about one-third of its 134 locations. As my colleague Don Lee reported, Rubio’s attributed the closings to the rising cost of doing business in California. There’s more to the story, however. The biggest expense Rubio’s has been facing is debt — a burden that has grown since the chain was acquired in 2010 by the private equity firm Mill Road Capital. By 2020, the chain owed $72.3 million, and it filed for bankruptcy. Indeed, in its full declaration with the bankruptcy court filed on June 5, the company acknowledged that along with increases in the minimum wage, it was facing an “unsustainable debt burden.” The company emerged from bankruptcy at the end of 2020 with settlements that included a reduction in its debt load. Then came the pandemic, a significant headwind. Among its struggles was again its debt — $72.9 million owed to its largest creditor, TREW Capital Management, a firm that specializes in lending to distressed restaurant businesses. It filed for bankruptcy again on June 5, two days after announcing its store closings. The case is pending. It’s worth noting that high debt is often a feature of private-equity takeovers — in such cases saddling an acquired company with debt gives the acquirers a means to extract cash from their companies, even if it complicates the companies’ path to profitability. Whether that’s a factor in Rubio’s recent difficulties isn’t clear. That brings us back to the claim that job losses among California’s fast-food restaurants are due to the new minimum wage law. The assertion appears to have originated with the Wall Street Journal, which reported on March 25 that restaurants across California were cutting jobs in anticipation of the minimum wage increase taking effect on April 1. The article stated that employment in California’s fast-food and “other limited-service eateries was 726,600 in January, “down 1.3% from last September,” when Newsom signed the minimum wage law. That worked out to employment of 736,170 in September, for a purported loss of 9,570 jobs from September through January. The Journal’s numbers were used as grist by UCLA economics professor Lee E. Ohanian for an article he published on April 24 on the website of the Hoover Institution, where he is a senior fellow. Ohanian wrote that the pace of the job loss in fast-food was far greater than the overall decline in private employment in California from September through January, “which makes it tempting to conclude that many of those lost fast-food jobs resulted from the higher labor costs employers would need to pay” when the new law kicked in. CABIA cited Ohanian’s article as the source for its claim in its USA Today ad that “nearly 10,000” fast-food jobs were lost due to the minimum wage law. “The rapid job cuts, rising prices, and business closures are a direct result of Gov. Newsom and this short-sighted legislation,” CABIA founder and president Tom Manzo says on the organization’s website. Here’s the problem with that figure: It’s derived from a government statistic that is not seasonally adjusted. That’s crucial when tracking jobs in seasonal industries, such as restaurants, because their business and consequently employment fluctuate in predictable patterns through the year. For this reason, economists vastly prefer seasonally adjusted figures when plotting out employment trend lines in those industries. The Wall Street Journal’s figures correspond to non-seasonally adjusted figures for California fast-food employment published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. (I’m indebted to nonpareil financial blogger Barry Ritholtz and his colleague, the pseudonymous Invictus, for spotlighting this issue.) Figures for California fast-food restaurants from the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis show that on a seasonally adjusted basis, employment actually rose in the September-to-January period by 6,335 jobs, from 736,160 to 742,495. That’s not to say that there haven’t been employment cutbacks this year by some fast-food chains and other companies in hospitality industries. From the vantage point of laid-off workers, the manipulation of statistics by their employers doesn’t ease the pain of losing their jobs. Still, as Ritholtz and Invictus point out, it’s hornbook economics that the proper way to deal with non-seasonally adjusted figures is to use year-to-year comparisons, which obviate seasonal trends. Doing so with the California fast-food statistics gives us a different picture from the one that CABIA paints. In that business sector, September employment rose from a seasonally adjusted 730,000 in 2022 to 736,160 in 2023. In January, employment rose from 732,738 in 2023 to 742,495 this year. Restaurant lobbyists can’t pretend that they’re unfamiliar with the concept of seasonality. It’s been a known feature of the business since, like, forever. The restaurant consultantship Toast even offers tips to restaurant owners on how to manage the phenomenon, noting that “April to September is the busiest season of the year,” largely because that period encompasses Mother’s Day and Father’s Day, “two of the busiest restaurant days of the year,” and because good weather encourages customers to eat out more often. What’s the slowest period? November to January, “when many people travel for holidays like Thanksgiving or Christmas and spend time cooking and eating with family.” In other words, the lobbyists, the Journal and their followers all based their expressions of concern on a known pattern in which restaurant employment peaks into September and then slumps through January — every year. They chose to blame the pattern on the California minimum wage law, which plainly had nothing to do with it. One can’t look into their hearts and souls, but under the circumstances their arguments seem more than a teensy bit cynical. CABIA’s Manzo said by email that the alliance’s source for the job-loss statistic in its advertisement was the Hoover Institution, whose “work and credibility speaks for itself.” He’s wrong about the source. Ohanian explicitly drew the number he cited in his Hoover Institution post from the Wall Street Journal; he didn’t do any independent analysis. Ohanian acknowledged by email that “if the data are not seasonally adjusted, then no conclusions can be drawn from those data regarding AB 1228,” the minimum wage law. He said he interpreted the Wall Street Journal’s figures as seasonally adjusted and said he would query the Journal about the issue in anticipation of writing about it later this summer. The author of the Wall Street Journal article, Heather Haddon, didn’t reply to my inquiry about why she appeared to use non-seasonally adjusted figures when the adjusted figures were more appropriate.

### AT: Pay Gap

#### The pay gap doesn’t exist

Jacques 23 [Ingrid Jacques, columnist at USA TODAY, 03-14-2023, "Are pay gaps 'sexist'? Democrats want more laws, but that could harm, not help, women.", USA TODAY, https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/columnist/2023/03/14/equal-pay-day-myth-truth-income-women/11464213002/]/Kankee

It all sounds very maddening and unfair. Until you dig into the numbers and look at why this is the case. Gender 'pay gap' stats are misleading When you do, it becomes clear that government efforts to “close the gap” could make lives harder for women. As a woman, I 100% want to be paid equally for equal work and think that should be the standard for all women. The good news is that this is already happening. But that’s not what Democratic politicians want you to believe. As in previous sessions of Congress, Democrats recently reintroduced the perennial Paycheck Fairness Act, which seeks to bolster the Equal Pay Act of 1963 so women can "hold employers accountable." “Women across our country are still being paid less than their male counterparts, still being shortchanged, and it’s time we finally take action to close the wage gap,” stated Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., who is a sponsor of the bill. “When we talk about the wage gap, we are ultimately talking about huge, life-changing amounts of pay that women are being cheated out of. Women are paying the price of inaction, and we have to put a stop to sexist pay practices – for good.” What these sound bites and news releases don’t tell you is that this gap exists when job comparisons are not equal. When salaries for men and women are controlled for job title, experience, industry and hours worked, the gap nearly disappears. Equal pay for equal work is already reality Payscale, which tracks compensation information, found that the controlled gender pay gap is $.99 for every $1 a man makes. That’s not 100%, but it’s pretty darn close. The pay gap exists for the simple reason that women often make different career choices than men. Teaching, for instance, pays much less than say engineering or medical fields. And women are more likely to take time away from their careers when they have children or choose jobs with flexible hours. “What we've seen historically is the choices that women make, particularly when they are mothers, are just going to naturally lead to lower earnings in part because they're working fewer hours,” says Rachel Greszler, a senior research fellow at the Heritage Foundation. “They might be giving up wages in turn for remote work or more flexible type of work or maybe certain types of benefits.” If Democrats got their wish and pushed through legislation like the Paycheck Fairness Act, it could open employers to more lawsuits and force them to treat every employee exactly the same. In other words, more government involvement would make businesses less likely to negotiate a flexible work schedule (and perhaps less pay) with a female employee for fear of getting sued. Don't take away flexibility from women

### AT: Crime DA

#### Minimum wage increases decrease crime – it makes crime comparably pay less

Straughan 21 [David Straughan, writer and editor at Interrogating Justice, 3-3-2021, "Could Raising the Minimum Wage Impact the Criminal Justice System?", Interrogating Justice, https://interrogatingjustice.org/ending-mass-incarceration/minimum-wage-impact-the-criminal-justice-system/]/Kankee

Lots of research points to an inverse relationship between the minimum wage and crime rates. There is also no shortage of studies on the relationship between the minimum wage and its effect on crime. In 2016, former President Barack Obama’s Council of Economic Advisors (CEA) released a report to this very effect. The report details the ways in which wages do and could affect crime rates in the United States. The conclusions of this report were crystal clear. In its Executive Summary, the report states that “[h]igher wages for low-skilled workers reduce both property and violent crime, as well as crime among adolescents the impact of wages on crime is substantial.” It goes on to state that, “a 10 percent increase in wages for non-college educated [sic] men results in approximately a 10 to 20 percent reduction in crime rates.” In more specific terms, the CEA estimated that raising the minimum wage to $12 by 2020 would beget a three-to-five percent decrease in crimes across the country. Another report from the National Bureau of Economic Research found a strong link between youth wages and criminal activity. It concluded that “a ten percent increase in wages would reduce youth participation in crime by roughly 6 to 9 percent.” But it also suggested that the inverse could be true, with lower wages generating higher crime rates. The same report estimates that a 20% reduction in wages could increase youth participation in crimes by as much as 12-18%. Raises in the minimum wage may also reduce recidivism. The Bureau of Prisons (BOP) and other prison agencies around the country constantly assert that their primary focus is on reducing recidivism. To their credit, most if not all of these systems have some version of work-preparedness programming. However, these programs focus on the responsibility of the individual to improve their employability. But currently, many of the jobs available to these people when they leave incarceration do not provide a living wage, even at full-time hours. With that in mind, preparedness might seem like a moot point. One 2018 study from Princeton University examined the effect minimum wage and EITC programs had on recidivism. Among other conclusions, it found that “the average minimum wage increase of 8% reduces the probability that men and women return to prison within 1 year by 2%.” It also found that “results suggest that the wages of crime are on average higher than comparable opportunities for low-skilled labor in the legal labor market.” If recidivism is truly the goal of the criminal justice system, a minimum wage increase should be on its list of lobbying priorities along with budget increases. But conservative “thinktanks” have their own research that they like to point to.

### AT: Health Insurance DA

#### Case outweighs – increased wages improve health and doesn’t change coverage

Blavin and Gangopadhyaya 22 [Fredric Blavin, principal research associate in the Health Policy Center at the Urban Institute with a PhD in managerial science and applied economics from the University of Pennsylvania, and Anuj Gangopadhyaya, senior research associate in the Health Policy Center with a PhD in economics from the University of Illinois at Chicago, 2022, “How the Minimum Wage Affects the Health Insurance Coverage, Safety Net Program Participation, and Health of Low-Wage Workers and Their Families,” Urban Institute, https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2022-07/How%20the%20Minimum%20Wage%20Affects%20Low-Wage%20Workers%20and%20Their%20Families%20v2.pdf]/Kankee

In 2019, about 9.9 million workers had hourly wages at or below the effective minimum wage, defined as the greater of the state minimum wage and the federal minimum wage. Minimumwage workers were younger, more likely to be women, more likely to have lower educational attainment, and more likely to be Hispanic than all other workers. To date, researchers have estimated modest impacts of minimum-wage increases on health. Evidence suggests minimum-wage increases are associated with declines in smoking prevalence and the number of days with health limitations among low-wage workers and lower prevalence of low birth weight among such workers’ newborns. Moreover, recent evidence suggests minimum-wage increases reduce rates of mortality due to suicides, alcohol, or drugs and are associated with improved parent-reported health among young children. Several recent studies have documented that minimum-wage increases are associated with reduced employer-sponsored insurance (ESI) coverage among low-wage workers. This is consistent with the theory that as the minimum wage rises, employers of minimum-wage workers may cut back on workers’ fringe benefits. Although the measured reduction in ESI is not associated with changes in overall coverage, it could affect health care access and affordability. Few studies examine the differential effects of minimum-wage increases by worker race or ethnicity. Evidence demonstrates that increases in the minimum wage are associated with reduced racial and ethnic disparities in income. Given the well-documented inequities in health by race and ethnicity, future research on the efficacy of the minimum wage as a policy lever to reduce health inequities is warranted

#### Wage increases improve health outcomes

Desmond 19 [Matthew Desmond, Maurice P. During Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, 2-21-2019, "The $15 Minimum Wage Doesn’t Just Improve Lives. It Saves Them.” NYT, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/02/21/magazine/minimum-wage-saving-lives.html]/Kankee

For years, when American policymakers have debated the minimum wage, they have debated its effect on the labor market. Economists have gone around and around, rehashing the same questions about how wage bumps for the poorest workers could reduce employment, raise prices or curtail hours. What most didn’t ask was: When low-wage workers receive a pay increase, how does that affect their lives? But recently, a small group of researchers scattered around the country have begun to pursue this long-neglected question, specifically looking into the public-health effects of a higher minimum wage. A 2011 national study showed that low-skilled workers reported fewer unmet medical needs in states with higher minimum-wage rates. In high-wage states, workers were better able to pay for the care they needed. In low-wage states, workers skipped medical appointments. Or consider the research on smoking. Big Tobacco has long targeted low-income communities, where three in four smokers in America now live, but studies have found strong evidence that increases to the minimum wage are associated with decreased rates of smoking among low-income workers. Higher wages ease the grind of poverty, freeing up people’s capacities to quit. Some of the biggest beneficiaries of minimum wage increases are children. A 2017 study co-authored by Lindsey Bullinger, an assistant professor in the School of Public Policy at Georgia Institute of Technology, found that raising the minimum wage by $1 would reduce child-neglect reports by almost 10 percent. Higher wages allow parents working in the low-wage labor market to keep the lights on and the refrigerator stocked; failing to do so can court neglect charges. “These studies show the positive externalities of increasing the minimum wage on serious outcomes, like reducing child abuse,” Bullinger said, issuing an eloquent barb at economists’ obsession with the “negative externalities” of minimum-wage hikes. The list goes on. Studies have linked higher minimum wages to decreases in low birth-weight babies, lower rates of teen alcohol consumption and declines in teen births. A 2016 study published in the American Journal of Public Health found that between roughly 2,800 and 5,500 premature deaths that occurred in New York City from 2008 to 2012 could have been prevented if the city’s minimum wage had been $15 an hour during that time, instead of a little over $7 an hour. That number represents up to one in 12 of all people who died prematurely in those five years. The chronic stress that accompanies poverty can be seen at the cellular level. It has been linked to a wide array of adverse conditions, from maternal health problems to tumor growth. Higher wages bring much-needed relief to poor workers. The lead author of the 2016 study, Tsu-Yu Tsao, a research director at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, was “very surprised by the magnitude of the findings.” He is unaware of any drug on the market that comes close to having this big of an effect. A $15 minimum wage is an antidepressant. It is a sleep aid. A diet. A stress reliever. It is a contraceptive, preventing teenage pregnancy. It prevents premature death. It shields children from neglect. But why? Poverty can be unrelenting, shame-inducing and exhausting. When people live so close to the bone, a small setback can quickly spiral into a major trauma. Being a few days behind on the rent can trigger a hefty late fee, which can lead to an eviction and homelessness. An unpaid traffic ticket can lead to a suspended license, which can cause people to lose their only means of transportation to work. In the same way, modest wage increases have a profound impact on people’s well-being and happiness. Poverty will never be ameliorated on the cheap. But this truth should not prevent us from acknowledging how powerfully workers respond to relatively small income boosts. “When the minimum wage goes up, I see it,” says Dr. Margot Kushel, who directs the University of California, San Francisco Center for Vulnerable Populations, which is based in a local hospital. San Francisco and surrounding cities raised the minimum wage to $15 an hour last July. When Kushel’s patients have a bit more money in their pockets, “they exercise more. They are less stressed and can quit smoking. Their mental health improves pretty dramatically. Their sleep gets better. And people start eating healthier almost immediately.” Kushel continued: “We will spend an incredible amount on a new heart drug. But if we increased wages by $1, we’d save more lives.” Alexandria Cutler also works for a hospital. Two, actually: U.P.M.C. Western Psychiatric Hospital and U.P.M.C. Presbyterian Hospital, both in Pittsburgh. A 23-year-old black food service worker, Cutler helps to prepare and deliver meals to hundreds of hospital patients. “It’s important not to mess anything up,” she told me. “People have allergies or have had surgeries and have to eat something specific. Sometimes patients can’t have straws.”

#### Low wages harm dignity, which harms health

Desmond 19 [Matthew Desmond, Maurice P. During Professor of Sociology at Princeton University, 2-21-2019, "The $15 Minimum Wage Doesn’t Just Improve Lives. It Saves Them.” NYT, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/02/21/magazine/minimum-wage-saving-lives.html]/Kankee

When UPMC reduced her paycheck, Cutler took on extra shifts to cover the loss. It wore her down. During one shift, she tried to lift a full pan of mashed potatoes from the hot box. The pan was too heavy, and both Cutler and the potatoes crashed to the floor, hurting her back. She limped to the emergency room, where she was given lidocaine patches and sent home on bed rest. The next morning she was in so much pain that her mother had to help her get dressed. She missed seven days of work, for which she was not compensated. “I really love my job,” said Cutler, who today earns $14.42 an hour and has joined a group of workers trying to form a union at U.P.M.C. “I feel like when they appreciate me, that makes me feel great. But when the pay is low, I feel that they don’t see us as valuable at all.” A living minimum wage buys prescriptions and rest and broccoli, yes; but it also provides something less tangible. Low wages are an affront to basic dignity. They make people feel small, insignificant and powerless. Subjectively experiencing these feelings can have real health consequences beyond the material hardships of poverty. This is why the poor exhibit better executive control and a heightened willingness to participate in social services when they have been affirmed, making them feel more capable and proud. It is why patients who are treated with dignity by their health care provider are more likely to follow doctor’s orders, adhering to their medical care. When we feel seen and valued, we are more likely to tend to ourselves. The stress of poverty can also burden the mind, causing us to make worse decisions and ignore our health. In a classic 1999 study, researchers asked one group of people to memorize a two-digit number and another to memorize a seven-digit number. The subjects were then asked to wait in a lobby, where they were offered cake and fruit. Their willpower strained, those trying to retain the seven-digit number chose the cake 50 percent more often. Sendhil Mullainathan and Eldar Shafir, authors of the insightful book “Scarcity: Why Having Too Little Means So Much,” call this “the bandwidth tax.” “Being poor,” they write, “reduces a person’s cognitive capacity more than going a full night without sleep.” When we are preoccupied by poverty, “we have less mind to give to the rest of life.” After his wages were increased, Payes swapped all that coffee and soda for water and iced tea, an act of will that became easier to achieve as his working hours diminished and his cognitive load eased. He has opened a modest savings account for emergencies and now gets to spend more time with Alexander, often picking him up from school. Millions of American workers aren’t so fortunate. In 2016, 2.2 million workers earned at or less than the federal minimum wage of $7.25 an hour, a wage that hasn’t budged in a decade. These poverty wages, according to a recent review in Preventive Medicine, “could be viewed as occupational hazards and could be a target for disease prevention and health promotion efforts.” From this perspective, there is little difference between low wages and workers’ being exposed to asbestos, harmful chemicals or cruel labor conditions. These toxins compromise the well-being of workers and their children. The reverse is also true. A higher minimum wage is powerful medicine. “Before, I felt like a slave,” Payes said. “But now I feel, ¿Cómo se dice, más seguro?” Safer, he said. “I feel safer.”

### AT: Wage Price Spiral

#### Wages are not key to inflation or price spirals

Economist 23 [Economist, 06-15-2023, "Wage-price spirals are far scarier in theory than in practice,” Economist, https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2023/06/15/wage-price-spirals-are-far-scarier-in-theory-than-in-practice]/Kankee

A wage-price spiral is the stuff of inflationary nightmares. It refers to a situation when prices gallop higher—perhaps because of a sudden shock or policy missteps, or both—and wages race upward to keep pace with them, in turn feeding through to yet more price rises and yet more wage increases, and so on in a vicious circle. It can seem as if the world’s economies have been living this horror: in America hourly earnings rose by about 6% last year, the biggest annual increase in four decades. In Britain wages excluding bonuses are rising at an annual clip of about 7%. On June 14th, when the Federal Reserve elected to leave interest rates unchanged after ten consecutive increases, Jerome Powell, its chairman, warned that he was watching wage trends as one test of whether the central bank might resume raising rates in July. But the dangers that appear in nightmares usually bear little resemblance to the threats worth worrying about in reality. The world’s uncomfortable ride with inflation over the past two years seems to point to a similar conclusion about wage-price spirals: they are a caricature of what happens to an economy with an inflation problem. The historical parallel often trotted out in discussing wage-price spirals is the 1970s. Price and wage inflation seemed to interact throughout that decade, much as the spiral framework suggests. Each surge in general price inflation was followed by a surge in wage inflation, which was followed by more price inflation—and on it went. But the 1970s are flawed as evidence for the existence of spirals. The repeated waves of inflation stemmed more from successive oil-price shocks (in 1973 and 1978) than from prior wage gains. To the extent that wages and prices moved in lockstep, this reflected trade unions’ practice back then of pegging salaries to the cost of living, guaranteeing a ratchet effect. Spirals were a feature of contracts rather than proof of an economic concept. Late last year a group of economists at the IMF interrogated the historical record, creating a database of wage-price spirals in advanced economies dating back to the 1960s. Applying a fairly low bar—they looked for accelerating consumer prices and rising nominal wages in at least three out of four consecutive quarters—they identified 79 such episodes. But a few quarters of high inflation is not all that scary. A few years is far more frightening. Judged by this longer standard, the IMF economists offered a more upbeat conclusion: the “great majority” (they omitted the exact percentage) of short-term spirals were not followed by a sustained acceleration in wages and prices. In a note in March, Gadi Barlevy and Luojia Hu, economists with the Fed’s Chicago branch, took a closer look at the role of wages in the current episode of inflation. They focused on “non-housing services”, a category that covers everything from car washes to medical check-ups and which Mr Powell regularly cites as a useful indicator because of its tight association with wages. Mr Barlevy and Ms Hu concluded that wages do help to explain this segment of inflation: nominal wage gains have outstripped productivity growth by a sizeable margin over the past year. Facing that cost squeeze, service providers would naturally want to raise prices. However, the spiral thesis claims not merely that wages matter, but that they predict future inflationary trends. On this count, the Chicago Fed economists found the relationship unidirectional: inflation helps to forecast changes in labour costs, but changes in labour costs fail to predict inflation. Service providers, in other words, raised prices before rising wage costs hit their bottom line. Mr Barlevy and Ms Hu posit that employers may have been ahead of the curve in anticipating the effects of a tight labour market. That makes wages a lagging, not a leading, indicator for inflation. Adam Shapiro, an economist with the San Francisco Fed, has been even more critical of the wage worries. In a note in May, he isolated unexpected changes in wages to argue that rising labour costs were only a small driver of non-housing service inflation and a negligible one in broader inflation. Like his Chicago colleagues, he concluded that wage growth was following inflation. None of this means that wage-price spirals are a total myth, which some overeager commentators have written. As the IMF‘s study noted, serious spirals can occur; it is just that they are extremely unusual. Were inflation to stay very high for a long time, people might start to view fast-rising prices as a basic fact of life and incorporate that assumption into their wage demands. It is possible that this process has begun in Britain. But in America what is striking about the past two years is how relatively moderate inflation expectations have remained, despite price pressures. In a paper last month for the Brookings Institution, a think-tank, Ben Bernanke, a former chairman of the Fed, and Olivier Blanchard, a former chief economist of the IMF, decomposed the drivers of pandemic-era inflation. They concluded that a triumvirate of shocks (commodity-price spikes, strong demand for goods and supply shortages) accounted for most of the inflation overshoot since 2020. There was scant evidence that inflation itself had triggered higher wage demands. Wages shot up simply because demand for workers outstripped supply. Dreaming spirals Wages and prices can be driven up by the same force: excessive spending in the economy compounded by shortages of both products and the workers to produce them. Overheated economies are worth worrying about regardless of whether prices and wages are feeding on each other. For their part, Messrs Bernanke and Blanchard argue that as pandemic shocks fade away, overheated labour markets are likely to contribute more to inflation. To stop that, central bankers need to make sure that the demand for workers cools off. Only if inflation persists once the labour market is back in balance will fear of a self-sustaining spiral be worth losing sleep over.

#### Corporate greed fuels inflation, not labor

Schweizer 22 [Errol Schweizer, Forbes contributor with a BS from Binghamton University, 5-10-2022, "How Windfall Profits Have Supercharged Food Inflation", Forbes, https://web.archive.org/web/20220607021104/https://www.forbes.com/sites/errolschweizer/2022/05/10/how-windfall-profits-have-supercharged-food-inflation/]/Kankee

In the supermarket sector, for the 5 weeks ending April 2, U.S. grocery sales grew 6.4% in dollars but declined 4.1% in units, as higher prices pushed downstream by retailers started to impact consumer demand. Albertsons, the nation’s fifth largest grocery chain, reported identical sales growth of 7.5% for the three months ending Feb. 26, up nearly 20% from two years ago. Quarterly profits rose to $455.1 million, compared with a $144.2 million loss a year ago. And Kroger, which accounts for over 10% of all grocery sales nationwide, reported identical sales and profits up as well. Recent research illustrates these inflationary-profit trends, in particular. Over 53% of price increases in the last two years have been driven by profit margin busting the myth of a wage-price spiral driven by increased worker incomes gains, while wage increases were responsible for less than 8%. This is a big turnaround from the trends of the last 40 years, when profits contributed just 11% to price increases while labor contributed over 61%. And a Morgan Stanley analysis concluded likewise, even as news broke of declining worker productivity during the pandemic, that "real wages systematically undershot productivity growth for most of the last two decades, and the labor share of income fell notably as a consequence. Corporate profit margins were the prime beneficiaries of the falling labor share." According to economist Isabella Weber , “Outsize price hikes are at least partially responsible for inflation. Companies have bragged about how they have managed to be ahead of the inflation curve, how they have managed to jack up prices more than their costs and as a result have delivered these record profits.” And during a recent congressional hearing on inflation, House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Rep. Frank Pallone (D-N.J.) said “Corporate greed is motivating large companies to use the pandemic and supply-chain issues as an excuse to raise prices simply because they can.” This profiteering trend stood out in the food industry in particular. Food company profits far outpaced worker wage growth, led by Albertson’s (671%), Amazon (333%), beverage/snack conglomerate Keurig-Dr.Pepper (83%) and commodity giant ADM (55%). And profit gains outpaced topline revenue growth, such as at Albertson’s (by 17 times), Kroger (4.5 times) and Target (3.5 times). CEO pay at these companies averaged over $22 million apiece, nearly 1000 times the average employee annual earnings. Not surprisingly, many of these same food companies pay much of their workforce far less than a living wage including Kroger, Target, Walmart, Dollar General, Starbucks, CVS, Walgreens, Dollar Tree and Albertsons. So much for stakeholder capitalism. And shareholders were the main beneficiary of this trend. Stock buybacks as a percent of profit were through the roof at Walmart (38%), Target (52%), Dollar General (117%) and Kroger (50%). If such profits had been given back to employees, it would have meant annual pay raises for every employee at Dollar General of 112%, Target, 50%, Walmart, 18%, and Kroger, 12%. This dynamic essentially redistributed vast amounts of wealth upwards. Shareholder wealth grew by 57 times as much as worker wages. The labor share of national income fell back to pre-pandemic levels. While employee compensation rose 11%, real wage growth decreased 2.6% from a year ago, undermining the argument that labor costs are driving inflation. Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of food industry workers are food and housing insecure and depend on public assistance to survive. If Walmart, the largest private sector employer, were to give all of its employees a living wage, it would only have taken 2/3rd of the company’s profits posted in the 12 months prior to Q3 2021. Walmart’s reticence is not just from the executive suite, but also driven by investor pressures. Institutional shareholders tend to view worker pay increases skeptically, consistently tanking share prices when raises are announced and insisting that labor costs be kept at the absolute minimum so as not to lower their returns. But it doesn’t have to be this way. Instead of relying on higher interest rates, there are policy remedies that could be implemented to slow down and reverse price inflation, while building a more fair and just food system in the process.

### AT: UBI CP

#### UBI increases social inequality, destroys wages, and harms employee dignity

Rogers 16 [Brishen Rogers, Assistant Professor of Law at the Temple University James E. Beasley School of Law, 2016, “Justice at Work: Minimum Wage Laws and Social Equality,” Texas Law Review, https://texaslawreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Rogers.Corrected.pdf]/Kankee

All such challenges point to the need for trade-offs and perhaps to a multi-pronged approach to helping the working poor. For example, unconditional cash grants could alleviate the burdens of unemployment and of higher consumer costs; child-care subsidies could benefit both the working poor and parents more generally. Such limitations of minimum wage laws should therefore not undermine the basic normative points that a society should encourage decent work and that consumers and employers often should bear the burden of higher labor costs. Minimum wage laws are a relatively effective means of achieving both goals. 2. Incentive Effects of Transfers.—While transfers can help alleviate the burdens of unemployment and poverty more generally, they cannot substitute entirely for labor-market regulations. For one thing, while transfers do not cartelize the labor market, income and wealth taxation do reduce talented individuals’ incentives to work hard or create jobs and may encourage entrepreneurs to relocate into lower tax jurisdictions.207 More importantly, transfers can incentivize the use of extremely lowwage labor, which will in turn encourage class and status differentiation. For example, the EITC tends to draw additional individuals into the labor market, but not all workers are able to take advantage of the EITC; the net effect is downward pressure on wages, and a subsidy to employers or consumers.208 Wage subsidies can also have perverse distributive effects. They must either be generally available to low-wage employers, in which case many employers will capture a windfall, or they can be targeted to particular groups of workers, in which case employers may favor that group over another, with morally arbitrary distributive consequences.209 Subsidies targeted at particular social groups may also require workers to report their disadvantages to a potential employer, a sort of “shameful revelation” that can actively undermine workers’ self-respect.210 Ultimately, transfers that are not accompanied by wage regulations can substantially undermine social equality even as they create employment opportunities. For example, consider the effects on low-wage labor markets if the minimum wage were repealed altogether and replaced with the EITC or a general wage subsidy. At a certain market wage—say, $2 an hour— even middle-class families would have lives of luxury. Food would be cheap. Few such families would mow their own lawn or clean their own house anymore. Many could even hire a butler, or a chef, or perhaps a chauffeur to make long commutes more tolerable. Notably, those workers might even have a decent standard of living if the EITC or wage subsidy were high enough. But history strongly suggests that many would treat all those $2-an-hour servants poorly, reasoning that their low wages must be due to some moral failing and consumers’ lives of leisure due to some moral virtue. While basic income programs would avoid some of these perversities, they are not a panacea. Since a basic income would be universal, proponents argue convincingly that it would not carry the stigma attached to means-tested programs—it would be more akin to Social Security than to “welfare.”211 A basic income would also enable recipients to reject undignified work. But as argued above, rights against the state cannot entirely substitute for rights against employers.212 Moreover, the basic utilitarian critique of wealth taxes returns here with a vengeance: if guaranteed a basic income, many individuals would choose not to work at all. Funding such a program would also require high levels of wealth and income taxation, creating incentives for capital flight and reduced effort among the wealthy and talented.213 Finally, the implications of a robust basic income could be strongly dystopian unless it was offered to noncitizen residents, and policymakers have little incentive to do so.214 In a basic income state, menial work would still need to be performed; with citizens effectively “excused,” is there any reason to think that guest workers and other irregular migrants from the Global South would not be imported for that purpose?215 This is not a criticism of immigration or labor migration, but rather an argument that guest-worker programs, particularly insofar as they offer no path to citizenship, may actively undermine social equality by creating a permanent underclass of degraded workers.216 Ultimately, a combination of policies is likely necessary to ensure both equality of resources and social equality. A number of economists have recommended combining a minimum wage increase with a more generous EITC since the policies will have complementary effects: the EITC will encourage employment, while the minimum wage will reduce wage inequality.217 If and when a basic income becomes politically feasible, it would also be an attractive policy option alongside minimum wages, particularly if it were generous enough to enable individuals to engage in caregiving or other unpaid work rather than needing to work to survive. In fact, so long as transfers are politically saleable, ideals of social equality may counsel for setting minimum wages at the highest sustainable level, so as to make a substantial difference in workers’ ability to live a decent material life, then compensating the unemployed through generous unconditional transfers. Those ideals also counsel for indexing the mandated minimum to inflation: while doing so would likely lead to greater employment effects over time, the resulting gains in social equality would also be more stable.218 3. Further Refining and Extending the Argument.—At the same time, perhaps policymakers do not face tragic choices after all. The analysis above has assumed that minimum wage laws decrease demand for lowwage labor. But this may be untrue, at least for minimum wage levels within their historic limits. Without going deeply into the research, in recent years an increasing number of economists have spoken in favor of increasing the minimum wage.219 For example, in a recent poll of thirtyeight prominent academic economists, a plurality felt that increasing the minimum to around $9 an hour would not have serious detrimental effects upon the low-wage labor market.220

#### UBI destroys the US economy, causes massive debt, and implodes gender equality

Engster 15 [Daniel Engster, professor in the Master of Public Policy program and Director of the Elizabeth D. Rockwell Center on Ethics and Leadership at the University of Houston, 2015, Justice, Care, and the Welfare State,” Oxford University Press, https://academic.oup.com/book/11844/chapter-abstract/160953202?redirectedFrom=fulltext]/Kankee

As argued in Chapter 4 (Section 3 and 4), care ethics endorses a universal basic income for the elderly. As such, it might be thought that care ethics would also support a universal basic income for all adults. The elderly are, however, a unique group with special needs. An unconditional universal basic income for all working age adults is different in key respects. There are four good reasons, from a care ethics perspective, for rejecting a universal basic income for working age people. First, a universal basic income pegged at or near the poverty line would be very expensive and would possibly push out other important social programs such as childcare or long-term care subsidies (Bergmann 2006). In the United States, for example, the median annual income is currently around $27,000 per year (2014). A basic income pegged at the international poverty line—50 percent of median income—would thus be $13,500. There are roughly 239 million individuals aged 18 and over in the United States. If every one of these individuals were granted a basic subsistence income, the annual cost would be 3.227 trillion dollars, or about 21 percent of current GDP. Van Parijs suggests that the apparently high cost of a universal basic income would be offset by savings from other programs: “a wide range of existing benefits can be abolished or reduced once a UBI [Universal Basic Income] is in place” (2001, 22). A universal basic income would not, however, replace the need for many of the state programs that play an important role in promoting justice. A subsistence income, for example, is hardly sufficient to allow individuals to purchase quality childcare, primary and secondary education, health insurance, and long-term care services. It is also arguably not sufficient for supporting the independence and employment of many disabled people. The only currently existing welfare programs that a universal basic income might potentially replace are unemployment insurance, old age pensions, the costs of paid parenting leaves, and (some) disability support.13 The state would still need to provide or heavily subsidize childcare, primary and secondary education, health care, long-term care and personal assistance services, and employment programs for disabled people and possibly others—with total costs around roughly 22 percent of GDP. The overall costs of a universal basic income and other welfare state services would thus amount to 43 percent of GDP. If government spending on other programs (national defense, criminal justice, infrastructure support, regulatory agencies, interest on the debt, transportation) were 10–15 percent of GDP, the total budget would be roughly 55 percent of GDP. This is probably not sustainable. At present, even the highest taxing democracies in the Western world—Denmark and Sweden—collect less than 50 percent of GDP in taxes (48 and 44 percent, respectively, in 2012). The highest amount any Western state has collected in the last 20 years was in Sweden, which in 2000 collected 51.4 percent of GDP in taxes, before undertaking a series of cost cuts that significantly reduced tax rates (OECD.stat, 2014). If even the solidaristic Swedes balked at a tax rate over 50 percent, it is doubtful that the populations of most states would be willing to support a universal basic income while also continuing to support other important social programs. One danger of a universal basic income, therefore, is that it would push out other social programs that are arguably more important for social justice. A second, related danger of a subsistence-level universal basic income is that it might erode the ability of states to fund important social programs over the long term—including a decent basic income for all—by undermining work incentives. If public expenditures were 55 percent of GDP, the state would almost surely have to impose fairly high and extensive income or payroll taxes on all workers, including moderate to low earners.14 The most common proposal is a high flat tax (e.g., 50 percent) on all labor income (Robeyns 2010, 133). While other measures have been proposed for funding a basic income, such as ecological or oil taxes, they would likely cover only a small portion of its costs and would in any case probably contribute to higher prices on consumer goods, which would offset the value of the basic income. Insofar as individuals already enjoyed a guaranteed subsistence income under a basic income scheme, their incentive for taking low-paying jobs—taxed at relatively high rates—would be very low, leading to an increase in non-employed individuals. If a large number of individuals chose not to work under a basic income plan, then tax rates on individuals who did work would have to increase to make up the difference, thus creating an even greater disincentive to work. As Barbara Bergmann (2006, 139) notes, the result would be a “vicious circle: Fewer working for pay, causing lower tax revenues, requiring an increase in tax rates, causing fewer to work for pay, and so on.”15 Over time, a high-paying universal basic income would likely erode the financial basis of its own existence and other welfare policies. A third set of concerns about basic income proposals for working age people relates to its impact on women’s labor force participation and social equality (Robeyns 2001; 2010). Basic income supporters such as Van Parijs argue that a universal basic income would promote gender justice by effectively subsidizing women’s unpaid care work at home and providing them a source of income independent of their partner’s (2001, 19–20). The most detailed, empirically informed analyses of the likely effects of a universal basic income on women, however, point to a couple of likely negative outcomes.16 Given existing gender norms, a universal basic income would probably function much like long-term (over one year) paid parenting and other family leaves, enticing many women but few men to drop out of the paid workforce in order to care for children or ailing parents. Based on empirical studies, Ingrid Robeyns (2010, 139–40) estimates that even a modest basic income would probably reduce women’s labor supply by 20 to 30 percent without having much effect on men’s labor supply. Because a universal basic income would likely encourage more women to spend more time in unpaid care work, thus causing them to miss out on raises and promotions in formal employment, it would also likely reduce women’s average incomes in relation to men’s. No doubt, a universal basic income would provide women with an independent source of income that they might use to escape abusive relationships. Yet, many women would likely be susceptible to manipulation and abuse under this plan due to lower labor force participation and economic independence. Overall, Robeyns concludes that a basic income would very likely have a significant negative effect on women’s income and social equality. A final reason for rejecting a universal basic income stems from moral considerations. Care ethics suggests that all capable individuals have a responsibility to help others meet significant needs that they cannot reasonably meet on their own. There are two main ways we can fulfill this responsibility: 1) by engaging in productive labor and contributing some portion of our earnings to support the care of others (through taxes or charity donations); or 2) by directly caring for others in need. A non-productive, non-caring life is, from the perspective of care ethics, selfish and morally irresponsible when willingly chosen by a person capable of work or care.17 As a corollary of this principle, care ethics also suggests that individuals have a responsibility to care for themselves as much as possible so as to avoid unnecessarily drawing on social resources that could be better used to care for others. Based on these considerations, care ethics rejects an unconditional universal basic income for all working age people. A universal guaranteed basic income not only gives license to social irresponsibility, but also actively encourages it by paying people to do whatever they want, including surfing all day off Malibu if they choose. Some individuals might use a universal basic income to care directly for others, but there is nothing in the basic income proposal itself to encourage this choice. If one believes that individuals have a responsibility to contribute to the welfare of others, high-paying basic income proposals will be unappealing. Van Parijs defends his universal basic income proposal by attempting to chip away at the idea that individuals should be responsible for working, supporting themselves, or contributing to society. He suggests that liberal neutrality (or equal respect) requires society to refrain from favoring some sorts of lives (e.g., productive, self-supporting, working lives) over others (e.g., non-productive, self-indulgent, non-working lives), and concludes that the only way to achieve true neutrality (and hence true freedom for all) is to provide all individuals with an income sufficient to pursue non-productive, non-working lifestyles if they wish (1991). He further argues that since jobs— and particularly desirable jobs—are a scarce social asset, all individuals should be understood to have an equal ownership share over them. By his account, any individual who holds a job should have to pay some portion of his or her income in rent to society for the privilege of working and earning an income (1995, chapter 4). This rent is rightfully paid to all citizens in the form of a basic income.

#### UBI encourages unemployment, decreasing economic equality, relationships, purposefulness, and social status

Austin 21 [Algernon Austin, Senior Researcher at the Thurgood Marshall Institute, 2021, “Ending Black America's Permanent Economic Recession: Direct and Indirect Job Creation and Affirmative Action Are Necessary,” Minnesota Journal of Law & Inequality, https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/lieq39&i=255]/Kankee

IV. A Universal Basic Income Is Not a Substitute for a Job Some people may propose that we stop worrying about jobs and focus on providing the jobless with a universal basic income. 152 This perspective misses the full meaning and benefits of employment in U.S. society. Work has economic, psychological, and sociological benefits beyond an income. 153 Thus, it would be a mistake and a grave disservice to the African American jobless to try to fill their need for jobs with just a basic income. Before we examine these other dimensions of work, we should first examine the problems that universal basic income proposals have in providing a basic income. For people who aren't poor or jobless, the thought of an additional $1,000 a month as Andrew Yang's universal basic income (UBI) proposal 154 calls for is very seductive. Many Americans are struggling, even if they aren't officially poor. For the poor, UBI proposals can sound like liberation from a paternalistic and punitive safety net bureaucracy with its many requirements for receiving benefits. But UBI won't truly be helping the poor if it leaves them poorer. It is important to examine UBI proposals very carefully. Yang's proposal called for a $1,000 per month basic income to all American citizens over 18.155 It is important to be aware that this amount, $12,000 per year, is lower that the Census Bureau's 2019 poverty threshold for a single adult under 65.156 While Yang's UBI can lift households with multiple adults out of poverty, it cannot lift single individuals out of poverty-and certainly not if that individual has one or more dependent children. Yang's UBI proposal also asks people to choose between a basic income and safety net programs. It states, "[c]urrent welfare and social program beneficiaries would be given a choice between their current benefits or $1,000 cash unconditionally-most would prefer cash with no restriction." 157 While at one point in an individual's life, Yang's UBI might be worth more than the benefits an individual receives, in the future-during a recession or during retirement or when the individual develops a disability or has children or becomes homeless-it might not. If there is a significant decline in the uptake of a particular safety net program because people have chosen the UBI, will there not be increased pressure from conservatives to end the program completely? Conservatives support a UBI precisely because they see it as a means to eliminate safety net programs. 158 For example, in 2006 the conservative Charles Murray argued for eliminating all welfare transfer programs-including Social Security and Medicare-for an annual grant of $10,000.159 Adjusting that amount for inflation would make it about $12,700 in 2020.160 The average Social Security benefit in 2020 was worth $18,000-$5,300 more. 16 1 For some people, before retiring, Murray's UBI would add to their income, but once they retire it would significantly reduce their income. The medical bills covered by Medicare can easily be worth much more than $12,700. In retirement, Murray's UBI would dramatically increase poverty and extreme economic hardship among the elderly. Only if a UBI is added on top of our existing safety net would the poor be guaranteed to be better off. Yang's proposal lifts households with multiple adults out of poverty if one uses the Census Bureau's poverty threshold. 162 But that threshold has been criticized for being too low. 163 If one uses a "family-budget" standard which would provide "a modest yet adequate standard of living,"1 64 Yang's UBI is not enough. For example, for a family of two working adults and one child in Birmingham, Alabama, the family-budget income that family needs is estimated to be $66,000 a year. 165 Yang's UBI would provide only $24,000 to two jobless adults with a child. 166 Thus, if the goal is to allow people to have a decent standard of living without a job, the UBI would have to be significantly more than what Yang proposes. The public policy professors Hilary W. Hoynes and Jesse Rothstein calculate that Yang's $1,000-per-month UBI proposal would require doubling federal tax revenue to pay for it.167 Of course, if we wished the UBI to meet the higher family-budget standard, it would be much, much more costly. Since a UBI is universal, most of this increased federal expenditure would go to non-poor, non-jobless households 168 while possibly putting at risk safety net programs for the needy. We have seen that there are several problems in UBI proposals' provision of a "basic income." But the challenges for UBI as a substitute for jobs do not end there. Economically, a job is more than an income. At work, people gain work experience, learn skills, and build social networks that can lead them to higher pay and better jobs.169 If an income is used to replace a job, then these opportunities for upward economic mobility are cut off. We do not want a policy that will work to further block Black upward economic mobility. In American society, a job is an important part of individual's identity and self-esteem. When people are asked to describe themselves to strangers, they often begin with a discussion of their work. 170 In Alford A. Young, Jr.'s study of the Black working class, he documents how these individuals think about the non-economic value of work. Young observes, "[t]he women's ideas of good work had a lot to do with feeling good about themselves as a consequence of what they believed they were offering to others in the course of their work." 171 While the women felt pride in their ability to help others, the men focused more on jobs as an opportunity to build their social status and to achieve respect in the eyes of others. Young reports, "men often talked about what the good job would do for their sense of personal identity in ways that would not de emphasize service to others, but rather provide elevated attention to social status and individual accomplishments made at work." 172 Substituting income for a job would cut individuals off from an important source of identity and self-esteem in American society. As a policy to help unemployed Black people, UBI as a substitute for employment has the potential to further marginalize these individuals and keep them outside of the American mainstream. The former U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy has argued that there is a loneliness epidemic in America. 173 In 2019, 61 percent of Americans reported some degree of loneliness.174 Loneliness has been shown to be associated with a greater risk of heart disease, depression, anxiety, and dementia. 175 Loneliness may be as harmful to one's health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. 176 There is research suggesting that African Americans suffer from loneliness to a greater degree than White Americans. 177 Lowerincome individuals report higher rates of loneliness than higherincome individuals. 178 While a job does not guarantee an escape from loneliness, it does have the potential to be a positive site for social interaction. At work, people can have regular meaningful contact with others, they can form friendships, and they can even develop romantic relationships. If we were to try to solve the problem of African American joblessness with a UBI, we may be exacerbating the problem of loneliness for African Americans. A job is a lot more than an income. But it is important to note that there are UBI proposals that could lead to lowering some people's income and increasing poverty and economic hardship. 179 Beyond the risk of lowering income, a UBI fails as a substitute for a job. UBIs do not provide individuals with opportunities for upward mobility that can come with working. UBIs do not provide individuals with opportunities to feel like they are helping others, contributing to society, or doing a job well. A UBI also does not provide individuals with opportunities for positive, meaningful social interactions to combat loneliness like work does. Of course, there are too many bad jobs that fail to achieve all of the positive potential of work. But even the best UBI would fail in achieving these broader benefits of work beyond an income. When we recognize the non-income value of work, we can also gain a deeper appreciation of the harms caused by a society that produces a permanently high rate of joblessness among African Americans. The damage from the loss of income is severe and serious, but that is not all of the damage. Joblessness also makes it more difficult for unemployed African Americans to build a good, meaningful, and purposeful life. Conclusion

### AT: Informal/Movements CP

#### Workers need formally recognized rights for self-respect, status, and dignity

Rogers 16 [Brishen Rogers, Assistant Professor of Law at the Temple University James E. Beasley School of Law, 2016, “Justice at Work: Minimum Wage Laws and Social Equality,” Texas Law Review, https://texaslawreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Rogers.Corrected.pdf]/Kankee

To be clear, this is not an argument that minimum wage laws require employers to personally express respect for workers. Since respect is an aspect of social relationships, it simply cannot be mandated by the state.162 But the state often does forbid practices and behaviors that tend to undermine individuals’ self-respect, or, in Rawls’s evocative phrasing, practices that encourage “attitudes of deference and servility on one side [and] a will to dominate and arrogance on the other.”163 Rules against sexual and racial harassment are a powerful and clear example.164 Minimum wage laws are another. They prohibit a certain class of employment relationships that lead to pervasive status harms. Moreover, even if employers pay minimum wages grudgingly, doing so may well reinforce workers’ self-respect by demonstrating that the law protects them against certain employer actions. 2. Formal Legal Entitlements and Self-Respect.—Minimum wage laws also enhance workers’ self-respect by granting them formal legal entitlements vis-à-vis employers. This is in part an expressive effect of minimum wage laws, which are an easily grasped policy “that symbolizes the political system’s commitment to working people.”165 Such laws signal that the state and broader society view workers as worthy of legal protection, even when doing so imposes costs upon more powerful social groups, as captured well in the textile worker quote in this Article’s introduction. But the legal entitlements provided by minimum wage laws are not merely symbolic. Under such laws, workers can hale employers into court to prevent enforcement of labor contracts that pay less than the minimum, employers owe workers correlative duties, and state agencies stand ready to intervene on behalf of workers. The relationship between formal rights and self-respect is an enormous topic, but a few notes on that relationship within political and social theory should suffice to develop this point. Within liberalism, this idea seems to have animated Rawls’s argument that in a just society “self-respect is secured by the public affirmation of the status of equal citizenship for all” through protection of equal liberties,166 as well as through the fact that “everyone endorses the difference principle, itself a form of reciprocity.”167 Public affirmation of such rights helps demonstrate that rights-bearing individuals are moral equals of other citizens. Once that moral equality is clear, employers will not as readily subject such workers to abuses, and workers will more readily contest unfair treatment by employers and other private actors. The relationship between rights and self-respect is also clear in Pettit’s republicanism. An “employee who dare not raise a complaint against an employer,” Pettit writes, is in the sort of relationship of domination that neorepublicans condemn.168 While the most straightforward implication of Pettit’s argument may be that employees deserve general rights to contest employer decisions, or rights against arbitrary dismissal,169 substantive entitlements such as the minimum wage have a similar effect insofar as they enable employees to block employer efforts to pay below a certain point. This rights-granting aspect means that minimum wage laws are actually not equivalent to a wage subsidy funded by a tax on low-wage labor, because this entitlement and its accompanying private right of action alter the power dynamics between employer and employee. The literature on law and social movements also helps elucidate the relationship between legal rights and self-respect. Much of this literature explores the relationship between legal rights and collective mobilization, an issue less central to this Article.170 But the very existence of such a link demonstrates that legal rights, particularly rights against private parties, can be an important social basis of self-respect. Per Stuart Scheingold’s influential account of the “politics of rights,” for example, marginalized groups can “capitalize on the perceptions of entitlement associated with [legal] rights to initiate and to nurture political mobilization.”171 This process can have effects on workers’ self-consciousness and self-respect that extend well beyond immediate campaigns. As two other sociologists argue in a leading study of social movements among the poor, after the assertion of legal rights as part of a demand for social change, “people who ordinarily consider themselves helpless come to believe that they have some capacity to alter their lot.”172 Similarly, I have argued elsewhere that the experience of contesting managerial decisions during union organizing can greatly enhance workers’ autonomy by giving them a concrete experience of agency.173 In fact, organizers have often mobilized workers around the rightsendowing aspect of minimum wage laws. For example, Jennifer Gordon, founder of the Long Island-based Workplace Project and now a professor of law, developed an innovative workers-rights curriculum that elucidated the gaps among workers’ rights to safety and minimum wages, workers’ lived experience of unsafe workplaces and sub-minimum wages, and a broader vision of justice that would involve even greater legal protections than those currently enjoyed.174 Where standard “know your rights” presentations began by listing a set of formal entitlements, Gordon instead flipped the class: she first asked workers to describe their own experiences in detail and then pointed out that their employers were in fact violating the law.175 This was a transformative experience: “rights stood for the possibility of government support in a context where government was otherwise notably absent, in an underground economy ruled by the market and by personal relationships in a situation of unmitigated power imbalance.”176 The fact that working conditions had been illegal rather than merely unfortunate altered workers’ perceptions of their work lives and even their selves. Workers began to view themselves as entitled to decent treatment, as having a right to have rights.177 Gordon’s account resonates with a strand in the social-psychological literature on “collective action framing,” which explores how socialmovement leaders and participants describe particular actions or conditions in ways that motivate social groups to take collective action.178 As legal scholar Benjamin Sachs has argued, efforts such as Gordon’s “deploy employment rights statutes as diagnostic frames,” utilizing those statutes to describe extremely low wages as an injustice.179 “The fact that it is the law—rather than merely the ideology of a union organizer or other activist—that diagnoses these problems as injustice invests the frame with substantially increased power.”180 To summarize, minimum wage laws directly enhance workers’ selfrespect in two ways. They increase workers’ wages by requiring employers to bear financial burdens. They also grant workers binding legal entitlements against employers and hold employers to legal duties toward workers. Transfers may enhance workers’ net resources, but they do so without altering the fundamental terms of the employment relationship. Granted, minimum wage laws may be a relatively minor alteration to employment-at-will rules—a point to be discussed in subpart IV(A). But insofar as private power in the employment relationship itself undermines workers’ self-respect, minimum wage laws help ensure social equality. B. Incentive Effects of Minimum Wage Laws and Transfers

### AT: EITC CP

#### EITC fails – lump sum and low awareness

Cass 15 [Oren Cass, chief economist at American Compass with a Bachelor of Arts in political economy from Williams College and a JD from Harvard, 8-19-2015, "A Better Wage Hike", US News & World Report, https://www.usnews.com/opinion/economic-intelligence/2015/08/19/wage-subsidies-are-better-than-raising-the-minimum-wage]/Kankee

Politicians across the ideological spectrum are increasingly focused on using government policy to support the earnings of low-income households. The approach accomplishes two goals at once: not only helping those working in low-wage jobs, but also making such work more attractive and drawing more unemployed workers into the job market. And yet the best way to it – subsidizing wages – is the one nobody talks about. Increasing the minimum wage is the best-known approach and one in the spotlight thanks to recent protests demanding a $15-per-hour minimum. But the minimum wage has significant drawbacks. Most obviously, for workers who are not worth $15-per hour to their employers, a higher minimum wage may lead to them having no job at all. Less talked about but equally important, someone has to pay the difference between what employers offer today and the higher minimum wage. Perhaps the employers themselves would see profits suffer, perhaps they would cut back on raises for other employees, perhaps they would simply pass the cost on to customers as higher prices. Regardless, the burden falls on a narrow group of people who are probably not best able to bear it. For these reasons, economists tend to dislike minimum wage increases and argue instead for expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit, known as the EITC. Low-income households receive this credit when they file their taxes at the end of the year, getting additional money from the government for each dollar earned up to a limit. For instance, a single mother with two children who earns $18,000 (equivalent to 30 hours per week for 50 weeks at $12 per hour) receives an EITC of more than $5,000 that lifts her family above the poverty line. The EITC solves the minimum wage's critical problems: It encourages more people to work instead of shutting some out of jobs and it uses tax dollars so the cost is distributed in the same way as for other government programs. But while the EITC looks great on the blackboard, it cannot deliver that well in practice. Recipients tend to be only vaguely aware of how the program works and what they could receive, which means it cannot provide much of an incentive to start working. They receive one huge payment long after their work year is over, which makes covering day-to-day necessities difficult. And because different workers receive different credits depending on the size of their family and how much they work, the labor market skews in favor of some at the expense of others. An ideal policy would look to workers like an increased minimum wage (more pay for every hour worked) but to the labor market and broader society like an expanded EITC (a government subsidy to support the low-income worker). A wage subsidy would do just that.

### AT: Race Discrimination

#### Higher wages decrease racial discrimination in hiring – studies prove

Brandon et al. 23 [Alec Brandon, educator at Johns Hopkins University, Justin Holz, educator at the University of Michigan, Andrew E. Simon, educator at the University of Chicago, and Haruka Uchida, educator at the University of Chicago, 11-8-2023, “Minimum Wages and Racial Discrimination in Hiring: Evidence from a Field Experiment,” Upjohn Institute Working Papers, https://www.econstor.eu/handle/10419/283983

1. Introduction Twenty-seven million workers earned under $12 an hour in 2019 (Shrider et al., 2021). Minimum wages are popular policies meant to redistribute income to these workers and provide economic justice, especially racial economic justice (Smythe and Hsu, 2023), but critics argue that disemployment effects undermine this goal. A large literature evaluating these claims finds that hikes increase the average earnings of low-wage workers, with little effect on the number of low-wage jobs (Cengiz et al., 2019), which belies larger changes in hiring (Dube et al., 2016). Hiring changes raise an additional redistributional concern that minimum wage hikes disproportionately harm disadvantaged groups, especially those who face discrimination (Friedman, 1966; Stiglitz, 1973; Clemens et al., 2021). We conduct a large-scale natural field experiment to evaluate how increases in the minimum wage affect racial discrimination in the hiring process. We sent nearly 35,000 fictitious job applications to low-wage job postings in three states before and after minimum wage increases were announced and in a contiguous state that did not change its policy. In each application, we randomized whether the applicant had a distinctively Black or white name, along with other characteristics such as educational attainment and unemployment duration.1 In response, we observe whether an application receives a callback offering a job interview, a necessary step in the hiring process for many jobs. The data generated from our experiment allow us to estimate the causal effect of minimum wage hikes on racial discrimination in callbacks. We estimate the effect of minimum wage hikes on racial discrimination against young Black men. While minimum wage hikes could affect discrimination in hiring against other races, age groups, and genders, unemployment data suggest that young Black men are the most likely to be on the margins of employment. When we launched our experiment in the summer of 2018, the unemployment rate in the U.S. for Black men 18 to 19 years old was 24.7 percent, the highest for any demographic group (BLS, 2018). Relative to other demographic groups in the United States, this high unemployment rate suggests that young Black men are likely to bear a disproportionate share of the effects of minimum wage increases. We find that minimum wage hikes eliminate the vast majority of the racial differences in callback rates. Before minimum wage hikes were announced, applicants with distinctly Black names were 3.2 percentage points (19 percent) less likely to receive a callback than equally qualified applicants with distinctly white names. Black applicants received eight callbacks for every ten that a white applicant received. After minimum wages are increased, this gap shrinks by 2.6 percentage points (80 percent). Black applicants received a little over nine callbacks for every ten that white applicants received. This effect occurs once a hike in the minimum wage is announced and persists for at least a year after it is enacted. These results suggest that, contrary to the concerns of Friedman (1966) and others, minimum wage increases do not exacerbate racial discrimination. To understand why minimum wage increases shrink the racial callback gap, we consider the role of different types of racial discrimination. We start by developing an economic model of the relationship between minimum wages, hiring, and two forms of racial discrimination: taste-based (Becker, 1957) and statistical (Phelps, 1972; Arrow, 1973; Aigner and Cain, 1977). In the model, firms infer the quality of the worker using information from the resume characteristics and the applicant’s race. Differences in the callback rates between Black and white applicants with identical resumes are either driven by differences in the firm’s beliefs about productivity by race or by a distaste for working with Black employees. We show how these mechanisms jointly determine which types of workers are on the margin of receiving a callback and thereby affected by the policy change. We estimate the model using data generated from the correspondence study to partially decompose taste-based and statistical discrimination, following Neumark (2012) and Neumark et al. (2019). We estimate the ratio of the variances of perceived applicant productivity by race, one form of statistical discrimination, as well as a composite term that reflects both taste-based discrimination and statistical discrimination in mean productivity. Since white applicants have less dispersed perceived productivity distribution and receive favoritism in hiring, a larger share of the initially marginal applicants are white, and they experience a larger decrease in callbacks after a minimum wage hike. The nature and extent of discrimination, along with the frequency of callbacks, jointly determine the change in the racial callback gap from minimum wage increases. More broadly, we provide a framework to understand how labor market policies affect racial disparities.

### AT: Elections DA Ukraine Scenario

#### No Ukraine internal link – US aid fails regardless of the election

Edel 24 [Anastasia Edel, educator in history at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UC Berkeley, 8-13-2024, "Putin Has Victory in His Grasp,” NYT, https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/13/opinion/russia-ukraine-west-war.html]/Kankee

On July 9, as the world stared at the blood-splattered rubble of a children’s hospital in Kyiv, Russia celebrated its rotating presidency of the United Nations Security Council with a lunch in New York. On the menu was “Chicken Kiev,” a popular Russian dish of thin pounded cutlet filled with garlic butter. Before tucking in, the lunch’s host and Russia’s permanent representative to the United Nations, Vasily Nebenzya, denied Russia’s responsibility for the bombing that killed two people and wounded seven children. If the diplomats choked on their chicken, they did so quietly. The incident is a perfect summation of the world we live in now. As the West watches on, seemingly impotent, Russia grows ever bolder, like a bully who realizes the teacher isn’t coming. Russians’ fear of NATO, palpable at the start of the invasion, is now tempered by the impunity their leader enjoys no matter the atrocities committed on his watch. Why be afraid? Despite having the resources to end this war on Ukraine’s terms, the West clearly lacks the will to win. For Vladimir Putin, victory is now firmly within reach — irrespective of who is in the White House next year. In the past two and a half years, Western leaders have reiterated that they “stand with Ukraine.” Yet despite saying the right words, those leaders continue to treat the war as a localized conflict in which they have few obligations. Promised military aid arrives late and in insufficient quantities to match Russia’s resources — and restrictions, like those against targeting military assets in Russia itself, limit the aid’s effectiveness. The recent Ukrainian advance into Russian territory shows what could be possible if the shackles were lifted. But the West is wedded to its too-little-too-late approach, justified by the risk of provoking nuclear escalation from Russia. Ukraine’s application to join NATO is a moot point for the same reason. Nor has the West managed to cut off the sources of Russia’s economic might, despite rounds of sanctions. The economy is growing healthily, and the assets of Russian oligarchs remain safe in the West, even if frozen. Most important, Russian oil is being bought and sold with minimal difficulty around the world as Western leaders can’t seem to decide what they want more: to meaningfully punish Russia or keep things as they are. Tellingly, the U.S. Treasury’s proposal to impose penalties on tankers that help Russian oil evade sanctions has stalled over the White House’s fear that higher gasoline prices won’t play well at the polls in November. One person not worried about the American election is Mr. Putin. Unlike the equivocal West, Mr. Putin is playing seriously. He has put his country and his economy on a war footing, dedicating at least a third of the state budget to the military and enticing tens of thousands of Russians to join his war machine with generous salaries and payouts. He has expanded the theater into NATO’s territory, financing pro-Russian parties and politicians, spreading misinformation and directly targeting Western individuals involved in sending weapons to Ukraine. When confronted, Russia simply shrugs off the evidence. This setup — an adversary with the will and resources to fight to the end and allies that deliver just enough aid to stop the front from collapsing tomorrow — leaves Ukraine in a bleak place. At a certain point Ukrainian resolve, already tested to the limit, will wear thin and a peace deal with Mr. Putin, on whatever terms, will become preferable to dying. This moment may come sooner if Donald Trump wins the American presidential election and ends the war “in 24 hours,” as he has promised, by forcing Ukraine to negotiate on Mr. Putin’s terms. Or it will come later if the Democrats keep the White House and continue their halfway-house strategy. Mr. Putin is already planning for victory. His latest so-called peace proposal — in which Russia keeps occupied territory and Ukraine is banned from joining NATO — was dismissed as propaganda by many Western leaders. But it is, in fact, the most realistic scenario for how this war will pan out. Voices ranging from Kremlin supporters to Nobel laureates and even the pope are advocating a “peace” that would give Mr. Putin what he wants. Ukraine has rejected the proposal, of course. But Russia, after pounding the country’s infrastructure, people and army, will almost certainly make it again. Eventually, anything that stops the bombs will be viewed as an improvement. Every war has winners and losers. If Mr. Putin wins this war, Ukraine and its allies, by definition, will have lost it. But defeat won’t be distributed equally. A peace deal on Mr. Putin’s terms will be bad for Ukraine. It will lose nearly 20 percent of its territory and around five million people. But that loss will be mitigated by the remarkable thwarting of Mr. Putin’s original plan to take over Kyiv and destroy Ukraine as a nation. War will stop. There will be dead to mourn, wounded to heal and a country to rebuild. Ukraine’s reputation on the global stage will be higher than ever and membership of the European Union will be in sight. The West, on the other hand, will be hard-pressed to find any positives. The failure of its leaders to prevent war in Europe, or to successfully punish the aggressor, will signal to others that borders are no longer inviolable. Frozen conflicts will unfreeze and old grievances will resurface, with institutions like the United Nations simply recording the damage. Russia, backed by other openly anti-West states like Iran and North Korea, will be further emboldened. The next conflict may well occur on NATO soil. If nuclear saber-rattling proved enough to hold NATO in check in Ukraine, why wouldn’t it work were Mr. Putin to invade a member of the alliance, such as Estonia? The European continent will no longer be safe. Ukraine and Europe won’t be the biggest losers of this war, though. In any alliance, the brunt of responsibility is carried by its leader. By first casting its lot with Ukraine and then failing to follow through, America has lost its place as the bulwark of the West that can guarantee protection and peace to its allies. Last year, its hesitant, piecemeal approach for lending weapons undermined Ukraine’s summer counteroffensive. This year, its political dysfunction held up the critical aid and muddled American public opinion on the urgency of helping Ukraine. In a matter crucial to the world’s stability, America flunked the leadership test. Anyone subscribing to the idea of America’s greatness will find this a hard pill to swallow. Depending on who’s in power in Washington, this reputational disaster will either be downplayed as a regrettable necessity or celebrated as a triumph of isolationism. But even in the world of “America First,” you need seconds and thirds to have your back. Will Europe stand with America in its looming geopolitical standoff with China, now reinforced by the natural resources that Mr. Putin has mortgaged to President Xi? Will the Middle East be as obliging in matters of oil prices? Time will tell just how severe the security and economic consequences will be, but one thing is already clear. A small war far away from America’s borders has reshaped our world — and made America’s place in it smaller.

### AT: Politics

#### Minimum wage increases are widely popular amongst voters

Rolf 16 [David Rolf, president of SEIU 775 with a BA from Bard College, 2016, “The Fight for Fifteen: The Right Wage for a Working America,” New Press London, https://thenewpress.com/books/fight-for-fifteen]/Kankee

$15 HAS WIDESPREAD PUBLIC SUPPORT There is growing evidence that the American public understands the effects of decades of wage erosion and misbegotten trickle-down policy, and that a shrinking middle class is shouldering a disproportionate social burden for soaring corporate profits. Nowhere is this understanding more clear than in polling support for higher minimum wages. In every state and every part of the partisan and ideological spectrum, a majority of Americans support a significantly higher minimum wage. • A major 2015 poll found 63 percent support for a $15 federal minimum wage, phased in over a number of years.106 • Seventy-one percent support increasing the tipped minimum wage (currently $2.13) to guarantee all workers the same wage floor, and 82 percent support automatic annual adjustments to the minimum wage. • A 2014 poll showed that a striking 60 percent of self-described conservative Republicans favor the government giving preference to businesses that pay their employees a living wage and provide benefits such as health care and sick leave.107 The same poll found that 71 percent of voters supported a significantly higher minimum wage for businesses that have government contracts. • Eighty-eight percent of voters also believe that the growing gap between the rich and everyone else is a problem in the country, including 79 percent of Republicans and 88 percent of independents. • Sixty-two percent of voters rate low-wage workers favorably, much higher than CEOs (26 percent favorable) and Wall Street (24 percent favorable). Congress receives the lowest ratings among voters, earning only a 17 percent favorable rating.108 • Polls show that voters are more likely to elect legislators who support minimum-wage legislation in 2016: by nearly two to one, registered voters say they would be more likely to support a member of Congress who votes to raise the minimum wage than one who did not. The same was said by a strong majority of independents, as well as voters who were living in states that voted for Mitt Romney in 2012.109 Although the federal government hasn’t yet raised the minimum wage in response to this wave of public support, many cities and states did, with a flurry of raises in 2014 and 2015—many passed by the people themselves via initiatives. These are among the cities to enact raises: In San Francisco, voters passed a referendum for $15 an hour overwhelmingly in November of 2014. Both the city and county governments of Los Angeles voted in the summer of 2015 to raise the minimum wage to $15. In San Diego, the city council voted to raise the wage to $11.50 by 2017, overriding Mayor Kevin Faulconer’s veto. But opponents gathered enough signatures to force the council to put the issue on the ballot in June 2016.110 In Chicago, the city council approved Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s plan to raise the wage to $13 by 2019.111 What is all the more surprising is that by many accounts Emanuel had opposed even a $9 minimum wage when he served as White House chief of staff. In New York, Mayor Bill de Blasio proposed a $15 minimum wage (which would take a state law change and a city law change). New York governor Andrew Cuomo used his executive authority to convene an industry wage board that recommended a $15 minimum wage for fast-food industry workers. The recommendation went into effect in 2015. Lawmakers in Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, and D.C. also enacted increases during the 2014 session. In Massachusetts, the state legislature raised the minimum wage to $11 by 2017—the highest state wage in the country. The Washington, D.C., city council raised the wage to $11.50 by 2016. Wage increases were passed by the people in even some of the unlikeliest places—the solid red states of Alaska, Arkansas, Nebraska, and South Dakota all approved minimum-wage increases through ballot measures.112 And while electing a Republican governor in the same election, Illinois voters also approved an increase in the state minimum wage to $10. All told, twenty states implemented minimum-wage increases on New Year’s Day 2015 via the ballot, legislation, or automatic annual increases. These raises are estimated to boost the incomes of 3.6 million low-paid workers, about 2 percent of the American labor force.113 Four additional states and the District of Columbia have approved raises for the coming years. Including all state and local raises, the Council of Economic Advisers estimates that more than 7 million workers will benefit from minimum-wage increases between 2013 and 2017—almost 5 percent of the American labor force.114 The 2014 crop of state minimum-wage increases alone will also generate $827 million in new economic growth, increasing to more than $1 billion in 2015 as low-paid workers spend their increased earnings on basic necessities like food, gasoline, and housing.115 Voters or legislators passed minimum-wage increases in ten cities and ten states—in a single year. 116 And the movement isn’t slowing down as more cities and more states introduce minimum-wage legislation. Voters are sending a message: they are tired of waiting for Congress and CEOs to do the right thing and are taking matters into their own hands at state and local levels.

### AT: Cost

#### The aff decrease the costs of public assistance – better health and incomes

Drexel 21 [Drexel University Center for Hunger-Free Communities, 12-2021, “MINIMUM WAGE IS NOT ENOUGH A True Living Wage is Necessary to Reduce Poverty and Improve Health,” Center for Hunger-Free Communities, https://drexel.edu/~/media/Files/hunger-free-center/research-briefs/wage-brief-2021.ashx]/Kankee

Community Cost Saving Poverty comes at a huge cost for communities. Public assistance programs such as Medicaid, Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), SNAP, and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) provide a lifeline for low-wage workers but come with hefty price tag. When businesses pay workers too little, workers must rely on these programs to help make up the difference or they must make tough decisions about their health and safety. Increased wages relieve pressure on these programs caused by low-wage industries and allow state and federal dollars to be more effectively targeted to people with the greatest needs. Forcing families to depend on public assistance programs due to low wages costs state and federal governments—and by extension taxpayers—billions of dollars. Researchers estimate that a minimum wage below $15 per hour costs U.S. taxpayers over $107.4 billion per year. A federal increase to $15 per hour would impact 10.5 million working families enrolled in at least one public assistance program, or about 32 percent of program participants.13 Raising the minimum wage would release pressure from public assistance programs caused by lowwage industries and allow state and federal dollars to be more effectively targeted to the families most in need, allowing them to be more effective in addressing poverty.13 Increased wages also lead to cost savings by lessening the health burden by improving community health, access to preventive care, food security, and community engagement. Crime Reduction

### AT: Econ

#### Higher wages boost business productivity and decrease employer costs

Drexel 21 [Drexel University Center for Hunger-Free Communities, 12-2021, “MINIMUM WAGE IS NOT ENOUGH A True Living Wage is Necessary to Reduce Poverty and Improve Health,” Center for Hunger-Free Communities, https://drexel.edu/~/media/Files/hunger-free-center/research-briefs/wage-brief-2021.ashx]/Kankee

Improved Employee Retention and Productivity Providing a living wage also offers benefits to employers. Because bringing in new employees can be a major expense for businesses, retaining employees by offering better wages can reduce costs related to recruitment, hiring, and training over the long-term.5 Higher wages increase the potential applicant pool, making it easier to find the right fit for open positions. Additionally, paying employees a wage that allows them to cover their living expenses means they are less likely to work a second job, put less than their full effort into their work, or leave for another job offering higher pay.56 A study of minimum wage in Seattle showed an eight percent reduction in employee turnover tied to the wage change.57 Dan Price of Gravity Payments has been outspoken about his choice to double minimum pay for all of employees of his company and how it has resulted in a broader applicant pool, greater retention, and increased profits.58 Research also shows pay increases result in increased worker productivity.59,60 Community Cost Saving

### AT: Military Recruitment DA

#### No impact to recruitment – recruits don’t join for pay

O'Donnell 21 [Wes O'Donnell, Army and Air Force veteran, 1-27-2021, "Would a $15 Minimum Wage De-Incentivize Military Service?", Edge, https://amuedge.com/would-a-15-minimum-wage-de-incentivize-military-service/

What Would Biden’s Proposed Increase in the Minimum Wage Do to Recruitment? But would a federal minimum wage increase to $15 per hour, much like President Biden proposed last Friday, impact recruiting for the military? Could a minimum wage increase make people reconsider joining? Probably not. Here’s why. In any branch of the military, an E-1 paygrade makes approximately $400 per week or $10 per hour for a 40-hour workweek before taxes. But soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines are on call 24 hours a day or often work more than 40 hours per week at the very least. This situation further lowers their hourly rate to only a few bucks per hour. If this were the end of our calculation, it would be pretty simple math. But the majority of Americans join the military for more than just a steady income. For some, it’s an urge to serve that can’t easily be suppressed. For others, it may be a family tradition of service going back several generations. For still others, it is an investment in themselves. Joining the service is a path to learn crucial skills that will help them achieve more in life once they leave the military. And finally, most minimum wage workers, even those at $15 per hour, don’t get the level of benefits that the military offers. For instance, I have achieved seven years of higher education without having spent a single penny out of pocket. In fact, when civilians thank me for my service, I always feel a little awkward. Why? I feel like the military gave me more than I ever gave it in return. So someone thanking me for all of the good fortune that the military has provided me just feels gratuitous. That’s not to say that I am not grateful for the acknowledgement. After all, we all remember how our Vietnam veterans were treated when they returned home. But the military is more than a job. It is difficult to compare apples to apples when there are so many other benefits involved in the service to one’s country. An Increase Will Likely Not Affect Military Recruitment and Would Help Civilians at Risk

#### Low recruitment is non-unique and family recruitment outweighs monetary incentives

Barndollar and Mai 9-1 [Gil Barndollar, non-resident fellow at Defense Priorities, and Matthew C. Mai, contributing fellow at Defense Priorities, 09-01-2024, "America isn’t ready for another war — because it doesn’t have the troops", Vox, https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/368528/us-military-army-navy-recruit-numbers]/Kankee

Not enough soldiers Three of America’s four major military services failed to recruit enough servicemembers in 2023. The Army has failed to meet its manpower goals for the last two years and missed its 2023 target by 10,000 soldiers, a 20 percent shortfall. Today, the active-duty Army stands at 445,000 soldiers, 41,000 fewer than in 2021 and the smallest it has been since 1940. The Navy and Air Force missed their recruiting goals, too, the Navy failing across the board. The Marine Corps was the only service to achieve its targets (not counting the tiny Space Force). But the Marines’ success is partially attributable to significant force structure cuts as part of its Force Design 2030 overhaul. As a result, Marine recruiters have nearly 19,000 fewer active duty and selected reserve slots to fill today than they did as recently as 2020. A decrease in the size of the active force might be less worrying if a large reserve pool could be mobilized in the event of a major war or national emergency. But recruiting challenges have impacted the reserve components even more severely than the active duty force. The National Guard and Reserves have been shrinking since 2020. Last year, the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve each missed their recruiting targets by 30 percent. The Army Reserve had just 9,319 enlistees after aiming to recruit 14,650 new soldiers. Numbers for the Navy Reserve were just as bad — the service missed its enlisted and officer targets by 35 and 40 percent, respectively. Should a true national security emergency arise, America lacks the ability to mobilize as Israel and Russia have done. The Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) — comprising former active duty or selected reserve personnel who could be reactivated by the Secretary of Defense during wartime or a national emergency — is designed to act as a bridge from the AVF to a revived draft. Almost forgotten even by servicemembers, the IRR earned brief notoriety when some servicemembers were “stop-lossed” during the Iraq War — pulled from the IRR and returned to active duty involuntarily, usually to deploy again. Today, there are just over 264,000 servicemembers in the entire IRR. The Army’s IRR pool has shrunk from 700,000 in 1973 to 76,000 in 2023. Forget building new units in wartime: the IRR is now incapable of even providing sufficient casualty replacements for losses from the first battles of a high-intensity war. And even if more Americans could be encouraged to sign up, they may not be able to serve. Before Covid, fewer than three in 10 Americans in the prime recruiting demographic — ages 17 to 24 — were eligible to serve in uniform. Those numbers have shrunk further since the pandemic began. Only 23 percent of young Americans are qualified to enlist without a waiver, based on the most recent data. Endemic youth obesity, record levels of physical unfitness, mental health issues exacerbated by the Covid pandemic, and drug use have rendered the vast majority of young Americans ineligible for military service. Scores on the ASVAB — the military’s standardized exam for recruits, which tests aptitude for service — plummeted during the pandemic. The introduction of a new military health system in 2022, MHS Genesis, has also hamstrung recruiting. Recruits used to be able to omit mention of disqualifying factors like years-old sports injuries, the use of an inhaler, or mental health counseling — often after some coaching from recruiters. But Genesis combs through civilian health records and automatically flags anything that runs afoul of the military’s medical standards. While Genesis has undoubtedly hurt recruiters’ ability to meet their quotas, it has done so by finally holding the AVF to its own enlistment standards. An Army of none? Even among those who actually remain eligible to serve, far fewer have any apparent desire to do so. Fewer than 10 percent of Americans aged 16 to 21 say they would seriously consider signing up, according to a 2022 poll from the Pentagon’s Office of People Analytics. Those interested in serving are largely motivated by material factors. Respondents cited pay, college tuition aid, travel opportunities, health benefits, and acquiring career skills as the top five reasons for considering military service. Only 24 percent said they would join the military out of a sense of pride or honor. Though the US population has increased by more than 50 percent since the end of the draft, the AVF has come to rely on a smaller and smaller share of the nation. In the all-recruited force, it is military families that have inexorably become the primary providers of new recruits. Nearly 80 percent of recent Army enlistees have a veteran in their family — for almost 30 percent, it’s a parent. In the half-century since the AVF’s birth, the US military has become a family business. This entrenchment of a “warrior caste” presents a long-term danger to democracy: A citizenry disconnected from its military can become indifferent to the missions it performs. Civilian oversight and accountability suffer when the military is insulated from public scrutiny and understanding. The percentage of veterans in Congress has declined precipitously in the 50 years of the AVF’s existence. But the immediate danger is more concrete. Should the majority of military families decide the nation is unworthy of their children’s service, as may already be happening, the AVF will become unsustainable. The worst of the recruiting crisis is still to come. American birth rates plummeted after the 2008 financial crisis: A “baby bust” saw almost 2.3 million fewer children born between 2008 and 2013 than had been projected before the crisis. The number of American 18-year-olds is set to peak in 2025 at 9.4 million, before dropping to about 8 million by 2029. With another baby bust during the Covid-19 pandemic, the following generation will likely be even smaller. Potential solutions to the recruiting crisis depend on one’s diagnosis. In the language of the marketplace, is the AVF a bad product or just badly pitched? Those who argue that the recruiting crisis is a marketing failure point to young Americans’ general ignorance of basic facts of military life. Forty-nine percent of Gen Z-ers in a 2022 Army-commissioned survey thought that American soldiers received no personal time off and no vacation days. Army surveys of Americans aged 16 to 28 conducted in 2022 revealed that the top two reasons this cohort wouldn’t consider serving were fear of death and concerns about post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The reality is that less than 15 percent of enlisted military personnel are assigned a combat role, and far fewer ever find themselves in a firefight. Despite the ongoing wars in Ukraine and Gaza, fewer American servicemembers are facing potential combat missions now than at any time since 9/11. A record dented by two decades of defeat has undermined the US military’s self-anointed status as the “finest fighting force the world has ever known,” leading to a significant decline in public trust. Though some might call the US military “America’s team,” it hasn’t won a game since Desert Storm, before most of its current members were born. A 2019 Pew Research Center survey found that 58 and 64 percent of veterans of Afghanistan and Iraq, respectively, say those conflicts were not worth fighting. A political horseshoe effect has helped cement this: both leftists and right-wingers publicly advocate for refusing to fight what they call unnecessary, unwinnable wars, with an especially sharp decline in enlistments by white men and women. Policymakers’ refusal to cut missions and offload defense burdens to wealthy allies greatly exacerbates the strain on the All-Volunteer Force. Though the United States is not at war, its military remains highly active, with constant deployments to Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Some branches and military communities, like armor, air defense, and aircraft carriers, struggle to maintain even a 2-1 ratio of “dwell to deploy” (the Pentagon’s desired ratio is three years at home for every year overseas). This unsustainable pace burns out soldiers, erodes morale, and helps fuel an epidemic of military suicides. Some more mundane elements of the military lifestyle are also contributing to rising disillusion within the warrior caste. Poor on-base housing, potential food insecurity, and a high spousal unemployment rate are unappealing for young Americans looking to start their careers and families. Relocation for servicemembers, which occurs every 2.5 years on average, puts additional stress on families and runs counter to the desire for stability people generally gain as they age. And the strong post-Covid labor market has limited the economic appeal of military employment. Dissatisfaction with the product isn’t just limited to military families. Gen Z, which already constitutes about 40 percent of military personnel, views serving in the armed forces through a different lens than the millennials who came before them (and who made up the majority of the fighting force in Iraq and Afghanistan). This “network generation” is immersed in the digital world, distrustful of institutional authority, and often viewed as psychologically fragile. However you view Gen Z, accommodating them is a tall order for a military that prioritizes hierarchy, physical and mental fortitude, and self-sacrifice. The “D” word

#### Non-unique – recruitment is already low

Usafacts 23 [Usafacts, government data accessibility organization, 11-7-2023, "Military recruitment is down. Why don’t young Americans want to join?", USAFacts, https://usafacts.org/articles/military-recruitment-is-down/

While the Marine Corps and Space Force — independent branches organized under the Navy and Air Force, respectively — anticipate meeting their 2023 recruitment goals, the military expects to fall short of its goals for the Army, Navy, and Air Force. The Army expects to recruit 55,000 new soldiers in 2023, 10,000 short of its goal. The Air Force also expects a 10,000-person shortfall, and the Navy expects to be 6,000 shy of its goal. Though the percentage of active duty military members has fluctuated since 2001, it has declined by 39% since 1987, its most recent high. Who is eligible to join the military? The Department of Defense developed a method for estimating the number of young adults who would be eligible to join the military. In 2020, its Qualified Military Available study estimated that 23% of Americans ages 17–24 were eligible for military service. (This age group represents 90% of the military’s applicants.) That was a decrease from 2016, when the department estimated that 29% were eligible. In addition to age and citizenship requirements (some non-citizens can join the military), applicants must meet a set of criteria regarding their health, education, and criminal background. What’s keeping young Americans from joining the military? In the fall of 2022, Joint Advertising Marketing Research & Studies (JAMRS), a program run by the US Department of Defense, polled people ages 16-24 about their likelihood to join the military and why or why not. When asked, “In the next few years, how likely is it that you will be serving in the Military?” 2% replied, “Definitely,” and 7% replied, “Probably.” Conversely, 32% replied “Probably not,” and 58% replied “Definitely Not,” amounting to 90% of young people who are unlikely to consider the military as a career path. “One of the biggest challenges we have is just that propensity to serve," said Stephanie Miller, the deputy assistant secretary of defense for military personnel policy, at the Association of the United States Army’s annual meeting in 2022. On the same topic, New York Senator Kirsten Gillibrand said “We know that America's youth have a historically low level of interest in military service and enjoy a highly favorable job market, which makes it even more difficult to recruit and retain highly skilled personnel” at the Senate Armed Services Hearing on the Recruiting and Retention Efforts in the Defense Department in September of 2022. Pay, future educational opportunities, and travel are the top three reasons people say they would join the military, according to the OPA survey.

## Negative

### DA: Election Link

#### The perception of harming the economy kills the Harris campaign

Messerly et al. 24 [Megan Messerly, health care reporter for POLITICO Pro and graduate from the University of California, Berkeley with a double major in English and Media Studies, Adam Cancryn, White House correspondent for POLITICO, and Elena Schneider, national political reporter at POLITICO with a master's and a bachelor's in journalism from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, 8-5-2024, "Everything was going Kamala Harris’ way. Then came the market sell-off.” POLITICO, https://www.politico.com/news/2024/08/06/market-sell-off-democrats-harris-00172740]/Kankee

Democrats aren’t ready for the Kamala Harris honeymoon to end. Monday’s stock market plunge is reminding them it can’t last forever. The global stock market tumbles represented a dramatic reversal from the cooling inflation and steady growth economists had been heralding in recent weeks. It’s also an unnerving reminder to Democrats, on the eve of Harris’ vice presidential pick, that public gloominess over the economy could hurt the campaign. William Owen, a Democratic National Committee member from Tennessee, called the market slide a “tremendously huge problem” for the Harris campaign. He sent campaign and party officials an email on Friday calling for President Joe Biden or Harris to urge the Federal Reserve to lower interest rates, then followed up again after seeing the futures on Monday. “This action is equally as important as who the VP is,” Owen wrote. “We cannot win if people think we’re headed into a recession.” The stock market, of course, fluctuates under any administration. Shares plummeted much more sharply in December 2018, under President Donald Trump, and that was before even steeper declines during the pandemic. Still, the drop on Monday could be a reminder of the Biden administration’s struggle to contain inflation, even though the U.S. fared far better than other major economies and unemployment, still at a relatively low 4.3 percent, has been lower under Biden than at any time in decades. It’s a particular issue in battleground states like Arizona and Nevada, where Democrats acknowledge that many voters are struggling under the combined weight of rising inflation and skyrocketing housing costs and are eager to find someone to blame. Recent polling from Morning Consult found that nearly 4 in 5 voters say the economy is very important in deciding whom they vote for in November, and that while Trump’s lead over Harris on the economy is smaller than it was with Biden, the former president retains an advantage on the issue. “We, as Democrats, need to be honest. There are still voters out there who are concerned about [the] cost of living,” said Mark Longabaugh, top strategist for Sen. Bernie Sanders’ presidential campaigns. “Prices are the challenge we’ve faced all year. That hasn’t gone away.” Longabaugh described the challenge as “surmountable,” but added, “To a large degree, the economic elements are already baked into the feelings of the electorate.” The risk to the campaign of an economic downturn is significant. The White House has touted its ability to engineer a soft landing for the economy tied to lower inflation, but it remains a delicate balancing act. A sudden spike in unemployment would undermine Harris’ central argument for the administration’s economic success, likely adding to voters’ long-running concerns about the nation’s trajectory. “There’s some fault lines,” said Mark Zandi, chief economist for Moody’s Analytics. “The only thing that’s been keeping the labor market together as well as it has has been low layoffs.” Inside the Biden administration, officials on Monday raced to figure out what was driving the sell-off and whether it threatened to expose some broader weakness in the U.S. economy. So far, officials and others close to the administration said they have little cause for immediate alarm, concluding that much of the day’s collapse was initially driven by a complex unwinding of investments in Japanese markets tied to currency movements — and not economic conditions closer to home. “The Nikkei should not have had its worst day since 1987 from one month of U.S. jobs data,” Ernie Tedeschi, a former chief economist for Biden’s Council of Economic Advisers, said of speculation that recession fears in the U.S. had sparked turmoil around the world. “This market reaction, if it’s purely based on that, is a wild overreaction.” The Labor Department, in its U.S. jobs report on Friday, said the unemployment rate had risen more than expected, raising concerns about a slowing economy and even a possible recession. Trump, who has struggled to refine his lines of attack against Harris and spent much of the last week questioning the vice president’s Black identity, seized on those fears on Monday by branding the market upheaval as the “Kamala crash” and warning of a “great depression of 2024.” At the same time, Harris has signaled she plans to go on the offense on the economy. At a recent rally in Atlanta, she promised to address price gouging, bring down costs, ban hidden fees and late charges from financial institutions, limit “unfair” rent increases and cap prescription drug costs, policies she said would “lower costs and save many middle-class families thousands of dollars a year.” “What middle-class families need is steady economic stewardship, not chaotic ranting lies,” said Ammar Moussa, a campaign spokesperson. “Donald Trump had the worst jobs record of any modern president and oversaw some of the worst days in the stock market in history while spending his presidency lining the pockets of his wealthy friends who shipped American jobs overseas.” Democrats’ position on the economy has coincided with a deepening frustration among some Harris allies inside and outside the White House with the Federal Reserve, which has declined to cut interest rates despite signs the economy is slowing as it seeks to contain inflation. The Fed declined to begin easing rates during its meeting in July. That means it’s now unlikely to change its policy until September, possibly depriving Harris of any lift she may have gotten from cheaper mortgage rates and auto loans and amplifying worries about a recession. “It’s clearer than ever that the Fed should have cut in July and that it’s getting behind the curve,” Tedeschi said. “I don’t think things are broken yet, and pretty definitively we’re not in a recession now. But why I’m torn saying that is I don’t want that to give false complacency to policymakers that they don’t have to do more.” The White House has maintained a blanket policy against commenting on the Fed, and it also declined to comment on Monday’s sell-off. Democrats concede that a weak jobs report and a stock market crash may contribute to perceptions of economic instability. But they argue that they also provide an opportunity for Harris to highlight her economic agenda. “Certainly it’s creating some instability now in our understanding of where the economy is going. But I think the American economy is strong and robust and can weather this little bumpy storm,” said Simon Rosenberg, a Democratic strategist. “Democrats should welcome the debate and be able to make the contrast between the strong performance of the economy under Biden and the weak and disastrous economy under Trump.” Mike Lux, a Democratic strategist who specializes in messaging to working-class voters, argued that Harris, unlike Biden, can try to have it both ways on the economy: As vice president, she can claim credit for the good things the administration has done — like lowering insulin prices and funding infrastructure projects — while distancing herself from the bad. “She’s a fresh face,” Lux said. “And she’s not getting the same blame on inflation as Biden was.”

### AT: Inherency low wages

#### Low wage workers are decreasing now – squo market solves

Abraham and Barkai 23 [David Abraham, Cato contributor with a MSc in Quantitative Economic History from the London School of Economics, and Simcha Barkai, assistant professor in the Seidner Department of Finance at the Boston College Carroll School of Management, 5-3-2023, "Low Wages Aren't a Growing Problem", Cato Institute, https://www.cato.org/research-briefs-economic-policy/low-wages-arent-growing-problem]/Kankee

Despite increasing polarization, many Americans believe that economic conditions of those earning the least have worsened in recent years. Former president Donald Trump blames worsening conditions on low-skill immigrants and the loss of manufacturing jobs to foreign competition from China and nations of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Senator Elizabeth Warren blames the erosion of unions and worker power and proposes policies that extend labor rights to all workers and increase the minimum wage to $15 per hour. These statements by high-profile political figures have led to a common perception of worsening job prospects for low-wage workers in the United States. By contrast, our research shows that since the early 1980s, there has been a significant decline in the share of workers earning low wages. We classify a worker as “low-wage” if they earn a real hourly wage below $15 and compare wages over time using constant 2019 U.S. dollars. We find that at the start of 1985, there were 36.5 million low-wage workers out of a total of 88.2 million total workers (41 percent). At the end of 2019, there were 36.7 million low-wage workers out of a total of 132 million total workers (28 percent). Remarkably, there has been little to no increase in the number of low-wage workers since the mid-1990s despite a large increase in the total number of workers. Alternative ways of defining the threshold for low wages include thresholds proportional to the poverty line or the median hourly wage. These alternatives show either a decrease or no noticeable change in the share of workers earning low wages. Comparing low-wage earners to the wages of top earners shows low-wage earners losing ground, but that worsening of conditions is not specific to low-wage workers: when compared to top earners, all other workers are losing ground. One way to assess the economic condition of low-wage earners that does not depend on a particular income threshold is to compare wage growth at the bottom of the wage distribution to wage growth at the middle and at the top of the wage distribution. If the conditions of low-wage workers have worsened, then we should expect to see wage growth at the bottom of the wage distribution lagging behind. Instead, we find that wages have grown much faster at the bottom of the wage distribution than at the middle of the wage distribution and have grown fastest at the top of the wage distribution. Wages at the 30th percentile grew in line with those at the 70th percentile, and real wages below the 30th percentile grew even faster. Therefore, unless one argues that conditions have worsened at the 70th percentile (which translates into a 2019 annual income of just under $60,000 for a full-time employee), one should not assert that conditions have worsened at the 30th percentile. Even though there has been a decline in the share of workers earning low wages, it is still possible that more people today are getting stuck in low-wage jobs than in the past. Perhaps in the past low-wage jobs were a temporary starting point for young workers and those re-entering the labor force, but today many more workers stay in these low-wage jobs for prolonged periods. To address this possibility, we use data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics to track the same set of workers over time and measure the probability that a low-wage worker moves to a higher pay bracket. Across time horizons and subpopulations, we find that the persistence of low wages has not increased, and has likely decreased, over time. A potential explanation for the decline in the share of workers earning low wages is the increase in educational attainment of U.S. workers. Since the 1980s, the share of workers with less than a high school education has declined and the share of workers that completed a college education (or more) has greatly risen. This increase in educational attainment should result in higher wages and a lower share of workers earning low wages. To assess the role of educational attainment, we provide two sets of results that hold fixed the distribution of demographic characteristics of U.S. workers, including education, at their 1985 values. These adjustments have the effect of greatly increasing the sample weights in recent years of less educated workers (since there are fewer today than in 1985) and greatly decreasing the sample weights of highly educated workers. We repeat our analysis with the adjusted weights and, not surprisingly, these adjustments shift down the level of the wage distribution in recent years and greatly reduce the downward trend in the share of workers earning low wages. However, even with these adjustments, we find a modest decline in the share of workers earning low wages. More importantly, adjustments that hold fixed the distribution of demographic characteristics of U.S. workers since 1985 do not disproportionately reduce wages at the bottom of the wage distribution. The opposite is true: the adjustments disproportionately reduce wages at the top of the wage distribution. Real wage growth at the 30th percentile is reduced by 15 percentage points (from 15 percent to 0 percent). This is similar in magnitude to the decline in real wage growth in the middle of the wage distribution and is less than the decline at the top of the wage distribution. Even with the adjustments, real wage growth at the bottom of the wage distribution is higher than in the middle of the distribution and is in line with wage growth at the top. Another potential explanation for the decline in the share of workers earning low wages is the expansion of state minimum wage laws. While the federal minimum wage in real terms is no higher today than in the early 1980s, many states have since set a minimum wage exceeding that floor. In 1985, only Alaska and Connecticut had a state minimum wage that exceeded the federal minimum wage, and the differences were modest. As of April 2023, 30 states had a state minimum wage that exceeds the federal minimum wage, and the differences are much greater. To assess the role of state minimum wages in the decline in the share of workers earning low wages, we provide separate calculations for different U.S. geographic areas. If high state minimum wages caused the decline, we would expect to see greater declines in geographic areas with higher minimum wages. We find significant declines in the share of low-wage earners in all regions, and the largest declines occurred in the South and Midwest, where state minimum wages are generally low. When we split states into high minimum wage states ($10 or higher) and low minimum wage states (below $10), we find that both groups of states show a significant decline in the share of low-wage earners, and low minimum wage states experience greater declines. In summary, we find that since the early 1980s there has been a significant decline in the share of workers earning low wages and that worker-level persistence of low wages has not increased. This conclusion holds across several subpopulations and thresholds for determining low wages. We are not arguing for or against any policy, rather we are suggesting future proposals should not be justified on the grounds of worsening economic conditions for low-wage workers.

### AT: Solvency Low Wages

#### The aff can’t solve – welfare cliffs, lost benefits, jobs, and inflation

Mckenzie 21 [Richard B. Mckenzie, Walter B. Gerken Professor of Enterprise and Society Emeritus in the Paul Merage School of Business at UC Irvine, 2021, "On the Minimum Wage, Both Sides Have Their Economics Wrong", Cato Institute, https://www.cato.org/regulation/summer-2021/minimum-wage-both-sides-have-their-economics-wrong]/Kankee

Econometric studies have uncovered these types of worker loss. North Carolina State University labor economist Walter Wessels found that with a 10% increase in the minimum wage, workers experience a 12% reduction in the overall value of their total compensation packages. In addition, if a minimum wage hike truly made workers better off on balance, then the “quit rate” among covered workers should fall, but Wessel found that it increased. Increased taxes and reduced government benefits / The foregoing conventional lines of minimum wage analysis overlook the fact that many low-wage workers receive various combinations of government welfare benefits that are “means tested,” or tied to their earned income. This means that hikes in workers’ money income from a higher minimum wage can be expected to lower their welfare benefits — to a surprising extent! If the federal minimum wage is raised from $7.25 to $15 an hour (meaning that annual income will rise from $15,080 to $31,200 for the typical full-time worker), those workers will pay more in income and sales taxes, and lose a variety of welfare benefits such as food stamps, child-care subsidies, health care, and rental assistance (among many other programs). Craig Richardson of Winston-Salem State University estimates that the so-called “implicit marginal tax rate” for welfare recipients earning less than $38,000 annually can be as high as 95%, which means that for each additional $1,000 in money income from a higher minimum wage, low-wage workers can lose as much as $950 in welfare benefits. Even worse, those implicit tax rates can spike to 1,400% (the so-called “welfare cliff”) when an individual’s annual earnings rise above $43,000. The proposed increase would do little to raise the net spendable incomes of many low-wage families but would boost the incomes of much-higher-income families. Richardson recently developed an online “Social Benefits Calculator” (www​.forsyth​fu​tures​.org/​b​e​n​e​f​i​t​s​-​c​a​l​c​u​l​a​t​o​r​-​i​ntro/) to compute welfare benefit losses from money-income increases for North Carolina residents. Using that calculator, he estimated the effects Biden’s proposed minimum wage increase would have for a single mother with two children. If she works full time, her annual money income would rise by $16,120 but she would lose $11,502 in annual welfare benefits and her taxes would rise by $3,178. Her net gain in total annual benefits (added money income minus lost welfare benefits and added taxes) would be just $1,435. Her implicit marginal tax rate on the added minimum wage income would be 91.1%. Her reduced benefits and higher taxes would mean that her hourly $7.75 minimum wage increase would largely evaporate, falling to just 69¢, which would surely dampen her incentive to take a minimum wage job even at $15 an hour. Backers of the $15 federal minimum wage stress how much low-income families with members now making the current wage of $7.25 need and deserve a pay raise. Ironically, the proposed wage would do very little to increase the net spendable incomes of many low-income families with multiple streams of welfare benefits. The increase would, however, increase the spendable incomes of much-higher-income families that are not eligible for welfare programs, with members (say, teenagers) who would receive the proposed $15 an hour. Conclusion / The Biden administration’s envisioned doubling of the minimum wage over four years would be far above the “modest” increases of the past, which have been the subject of previous econometric work. This means that the job losses from the Biden proposal could be substantially greater than what was experienced in the past, given that employers may not be able to lower fringe benefits and raise work demands enough to offset a substantial portion of the minimum wage increase. My University of California, Irvine colleagues David Neumark and Peter Shirley have estimated that Biden’s proposal could reduce covered jobs by 16%. But don’t count on the reduction being that large. Past marginal increases in the minimum wage may not apply to Biden’s proposed “structural” increase. Also, given that the federal minimum wage has not risen since 2009, employers of low-wage workers could have, in the interim, been adding benefits and reducing work demands (in many unnoticed ways) to attract and retain workers and remain competitive in their labor markets. Those workers’ non-money-wage gains could now be reversed when the minimum wage goes to $15 an hour, lowering the net predicted job losses but also leaving retained workers less well off (and maybe worse off) than proponents and critics now imagine. This is especially true for many low-wage workers who have been able to tap several welfare programs because of their low incomes. Finally, this should dampen the enthusiasm of those who see the proposed hike as a way to get low-wage workers off “the dole.” Because of the high implicit marginal tax rates, many current welfare recipients will be little better off because of the increase. And as the CBO has recognized, a $15 minimum wage can drive up the labor costs and prices in health care and childcare, causing many American low-wage and high-wage workers to lose health care and childcare benefits.

### AT: Poverty k2 Econ

#### Poverty is not key to the economy

Ross 23 [Kyle Ross, policy analyst at CAP with a bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of North Carolina, 09-12-2023, "Poverty Rose in 2022, But Policy Solutions Can Create a More Equitable Economy", Center for American Progress, https://www.americanprogress.org/article/poverty-rose-in-2022-but-policy-solutions-can-create-a-more-equitable-economy/]/Kankee

This newest release from the U.S. Census Bureau’s poverty data shows that in 2022, 11.5 percent of people—37.9 million—lived in poverty under the official poverty measure, a statistically nonsignificant change compared with 2021’s rate of 11.6 percent. Meanwhile, the supplemental poverty measure rate increased to 12.4 percent—40.9 million—from 2021’s historically low rate of 7.8 percent, rising all the way back to and exceeding pre-pandemic levels. While the economy over this period has been strong and resilient, an increase in the poverty rate reflects the consequences of policy choices made since the recovery began—specifically, a failure to build upon programs aimed at poverty alleviation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this increase in poverty under the supplemental poverty measure is reversible if policymakers permanently adopt proven strategies to grow the economy by growing the middle class through: enhancements to the child tax credit and earned income tax credit, an increased minimum wage, needed reforms to unemployment insurance, and the protection of recent permanent increases to food benefits. Doing so would advance the Biden administration’s ongoing efforts to create a more inclusive and equitable economy for all. Policy inaction led to higher poverty in 2022 The passage of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) in 2021 was the last anti-poverty, pandemic relief package signed into law and made improvements to the child tax credit (CTC), the earned income tax credit (EITC), UI, and SNAP, among other programs, while also providing a final round of $1,400 stimulus payments. Further investments in anti-poverty programs were initially planned, but the Senate did not have enough votes to push them through. The 2022 data clearly show the consequences of failing to extend the relief programs’ changes. Many expansions to government benefits expired by the end of 2021, allowing for some comparisons of the programs’ impacts on poverty from 2021 to 2022. The enhanced CTC had increased total benefits to a maximum of $3,000 per child, or $3,600 for those under the age of 6, from the previous $2,000 maximum; made the credit fully refundable; and increased the maximum age for eligible children from 16 to 17, on top of providing half the credit as optional monthly payments. The EITC, meanwhile, was expanded for adults without qualifying children: The maximum credit nearly tripled to $1,502; the income limit was increased by about $5,500; and access to the credit was expanded to younger and older workers. These refundable tax credits significantly reduced poverty in 2021. This is particularly true for children in the case of the CTC, which raised 2.9 million children out of poverty. The majority of this decrease in the child poverty rate is a direct result of the improvements made from the ARPA, as these changes alone raised 2.1 million of the total 2.9 million children out of poverty. The total number of people brought out of poverty by refundable tax credits decreased from 9.6 million in 2021 to an estimated 6.4 million in 2022. (see Figure 2) The large majority of this decline came from the smaller impact the refundable CTC in particular had on poverty in 2022, as it brought nearly 3 million fewer people—half of which are children—out of poverty compared with 2021. After the ARPA improvements to the refundable credits expired at the end of 2021, families with children and adults without qualifying children received smaller tax refunds and faced stricter eligibility requirements for both the CTC and EITC, as the program eligibility reverted to its pre-pandemic rules. The total number of people brought out of poverty by UI also dropped significantly, from 2.3 million in 2021 to an estimated 0.4 million people in 2022. Enhancements to the UI system—which expanded eligibility to traditionally ineligible workers, provided an extra $300 per week in increased benefits, and granted additional weeks of benefits—expired nationally in September 2021 after attempts to delay the expiration failed. The economy did continue to add jobs throughout 2022, and the demand for UI had been falling, but the cutoff came too soon, and 7.5 million people lost the entirety of their benefits at once. This was nearly six times the number of people who were still receiving enhanced UI benefits the last time the federal government let it expire in December 2013 during the recovery from the Great Recession; the program was still playing an important role in supporting those who had not yet found sufficient employment at the time it ended in 2021. The most drastic change to the number of people pulled out of poverty from any one policy comes from the economic impact payments. Three rounds of payments went out to Americans during the pandemic, with the third round being captured in the 2021 poverty data. This final payment provided $1,400 to each member of a household, including dependents, for most families, bringing an estimated 8.9 million people above the poverty threshold. Even though no payments went out at the national level in 2022, people were able to use these payments, along with other pandemic relief measures, to enjoy some financial stability while looking for better job opportunities, resulting in stronger wage growth among low-wage workers. Finally, SNAP continued to be one of the country’s most effective anti-poverty programs, bringing 2.8 million and 3.7 million people out of poverty in 2021 and 2022, respectively. This was partially due to a timely reevaluation of the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) that went into effect right as a temporary expansion that increased everyone’s food benefits by 15 percent had expired at the end of September 2021. This reevaluation, set in motion by the bipartisan 2018 Farm Bill reauthorization, determined that costs of a healthy diet had risen, which necessitated an increase in SNAP benefits that left most recipients with roughly an additional $12–$16 per month. Unfortunately, the emergency allotments that the federal government had provided to states for most of the pandemic’s duration to increase SNAP benefits to the maximum amount a household could receive, or a flat $95 for those already near the max, ended as of March 2023. This decrease in benefits may end up driving poverty even higher in 2023. Increased poverty rates do not cancel out the economy’s current strengths While the increase in poverty under the SPM is a deeply concerning consequence of ongoing underinvestment in low-income families, these data should be viewed in concert with other aspects of the economy, many of which are historically strong, and as an indicator of what works in growing the middle class and increasing financial security. Jobs are continually being added every month at rates higher than those seen pre-pandemic, unemployment is still among the lowest seen in more than 50 years, and rates of layoffs and discharges are among the lowest on record, signaling a healthy labor market. This recovery has also been far-reaching, with Black and Latino workers experiencing record low unemployment rates over the past year. Inflation has cooled significantly from last year and is low among other comparable nations, while wage growth continues to be strong, particularly for low-wage workers, even after adjusting for inflation. Real gross domestic product has also recovered and continues to grow at an impressive pace in the United States compared with its peer nations. Considering the progress made in 2021, a poverty rate of 12.4 percent should be considered unacceptable for the United States, and policymakers at all levels should take steps to reverse this trend and bring it in line with the other improving aspects of the economy. Congress can still take action to combat rising hardship

### AT: Workers Devalued

#### Wages don’t determine societal value

McCloskey 24 [Deirdre Nansen McCloskey, Isaiah Berlin Chair in Liberal Thought at the Cato Institute and distinguished professor emerita of economics at the University of Illinois with a PhD in economics at Harvard University, 05-2024, “Market Prices and Wages Do Not Reflect Ethical Value,” The War on Prices, https://store.cato.org/products/war-on-prices]/Kankee

The former governor of the Bank of England, the Canadian economist Mark Carney, complains that Jeff Bezos’s Amazon is worth billions whereas the Amazon rainforest, a major sink for excess carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, has no money ledger and so gets chopped down.2 Let’s value it correctly. Market Prices Aren’t Social Judgments But here’s the thing: prices in a market do not reflect ethical or personal or environmental worth. Nor do we liberals, supporters of price mechanisms, pretend otherwise. Jeff Bezos made a good bet, and the permission to make the bet turned out well for us all. To induce his competitors, and new Jeff Bezoses and new Amazons, to have a go at innovation, we need to have prices and profit reflect what you and I value in cash about his online mail-order service. By willingly paying for shipment by Amazon we send the message, “Suppliers, please do more of that stuff, quick as you can.” Do Bezos’s startling billions, though, signal that he’s a good guy? No. He may or may not be. Even if he acquired his monetary wealth, as Elon Musk or Liliane Bettencourt or Bill Gates did, perfectly legally and even ethically, he may, as an individual man, be an evil jerk or a wonderful saint. Can’t tell. Earnings are about what other people are willing to pay for the next little bit of your services. Nor do market prices or wages necessarily reflect who is “deserving” according to our stated preferences or priors. In a 2017 poll, Americans deemed high-skilled scientists, manufacturing company founders, inventors of new products or services, and technology entrepreneurs as deserving of wealth, on net.3 Top sports stars, pharmaceutical companies, and senior bankers—not so much. But prices and wages are prices and wages—what we value their services at through our decisions. Robert Nozick, the liberal philosopher, suggested that “capitalism” was unpopular with intellectuals precisely because its rewards were not apportioned to what those intellectuals deemed just—namely, what they were good at.4 They were whip-smart at school, earning high grades and the approval of teachers. They then went out into the labor market and, though still pretty well rewarded, looked around to see car dealers and TV celebrities and sports stars and financiers with better houses and higher pay. They resent it. A market system is not, they come to think, really “meritocratic”—that is, if merit is defined by grades at school, not the ability to sell cars or score goals. True, the price mechanism doesn’t or cannot distribute riches or costs based on this or that ethical judgment or objective criterion like intellect or hard work. The economist and philosopher F. A. Hayek understood the gap between subjective conceptions of worth and market prices very well. “The manner in which the benefits and burdens are apportioned by the market mechanism,” he wrote in 1976, “would in many instances have to be regarded as very unjust if it were the result of deliberate allocation to particular people. But this is not the case.”5 Yes, but as he also said, it’s irrelevant to how they help deliver the efficient working of an economy. Justice is a matter of individual ethical valuation. You can be blamed for injustice if you steal holy water from the font in a church. But the going price of water, or the wage of an academic, is not a decision like whether or not to steal. It’s the result of thousands and thousands of voluntary and anonymous and innocent interactions in a market. Prices and wages thus depend not on what you “deserve,” but on what people are willing to pay. It is a huge intellectual error, in fact, to view the rewards of a market as if they are a societal judgment on what “we,” collectively, value. The outcomes are neither individual, to which we can sensibly assign blame, nor a national decision by a tyrant, such as deciding to kill 6 million Jews or starve 2 million Ukrainians. It’s an example, like language or social custom or the history of music or science, of what Hayek called a “spontaneous order” and Adam Smith called (though only twice in his writings) “the invisible hand.” The price of water, or the wage of the academic, is not intended by a person or a group, neither by you nor by a tyrant nor by a lovely committee of wise economists. So it can no more be praised or blamed ethically than the weather or the varied gifts people have from birth or the course of the Big Bang. The phrase on many lips of “social justice,” Hayek argued, is nonsense. Society does not, in a collective, deliberative, planned human act, settle the price of water or pearls or nurses. In 1866, as belief in a benevolent God was fading among British intellectuals, the novelist and poet Thomas Hardy wrote: How arrives it joy lies slain, And why unblooms the best hope ever sown? —Crass Casualty obstructs the sun and rain, And dicing Time for gladness casts a moan.6

### AT: Nursing Homes

#### There’s no money for nursing home wage increases

Khimm 21 [Suzy Khimm, investigative reporter for NBC with a BA from Yale in literature, 3-7-2021, "America now knows that nursing homes are broken. Does anyone care enough to fix them?", NBC News, https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/america-now-knows-nursing-homes-are-broken-does-anyone-care-n1259766]/Kankee

“I consistently read horror stories from around the country of nursing homes that could have done better to protect their residents,” said Rep. Jan Schakowsky, D-Ill., who sponsored a bill to increase minimum nurse staffing hours. “We must ensure nursing home residents are not harmed because of deficiencies in the facilities they rely on to survive.” Kramer, the industry consultant, cautions against implementing new mandates for staffing without more funding. “If you’ve got to have more staff, but you’re not getting a penny more per day for the care you provide, then by definition you’re saying that something’s going to give,” he said, warning that struggling facilities could be forced to cut corners in other ways or shut down altogether. He agrees, however, about the need for greater disclosure, given the fear and mistrust surrounding nursing homes during the pandemic. “There is this false illusion that there is all this money in the related companies, and if we just recovered that, we’d have enough to pay for living wages,” he said. That extra money doesn’t exist, he said, “but until there is greater accountability and transparency, nobody is going to believe it.” During his presidential campaign, Joe Biden unveiled a sweeping proposal to expand home-based alternatives to institutional care, as well as a separate plan to make nursing homes safer, criticizing the Trump administration for weakening oversight of the facilities and providing Covid-19 relief funding without enough accountability. The nursing home safety plan details changes that the Biden administration could adopt without Congress, including more safety and health inspections of facilities, as well as audits of cost reports and ownership data, as advocates have been calling for.

#### Almost all staff are already paid a living wage

Rau 24 [Jordan Rau, KFF senior correspondent and graduate of Wesleyan University, 4-23-2024, "Most nursing homes don't have enough staff to meet the federal government's new rules,” NPR, https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2024/04/24/1246628171/nursing-home-staffing-final-rule-medicare-medicaid]/Kankee

The rules primarily address staffing levels for three types of nursing home workers. Registered nurses, or RNs, are the most skilled and responsible for guiding overall care and setting treatment plans. Licensed practical nurses, sometimes called licensed vocational nurses, work under the direction of RNs and perform routine medical care such as taking vital signs. Certified nursing assistants are supposed to be the most plentiful and help residents with daily activities like going to the bathroom, getting dressed, and eating. While the industry has increased wages by 27% since February 2020, homes say they are still struggling to compete against better-paying work for nurses at hospitals and at retail shops and restaurants for aides. On average, nursing home RNs earn $40 an hour, licensed practical nurses make $31 an hour, and nursing assistants are paid $19 an hour, according to the most recent data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. CMS estimated the rules will ultimately cost $6 billion annually, but the plan omits any more payments from Medicare or Medicaid, the public insurers that cover most residents' stays — meaning additional wages would have to come out of owners' pockets or existing facility budgets.

#### Wages increases can’t solve worker shortages – there’s no qualified staff

O'Connell-Domenech 23 [Alejandra O'Connell-Domenech, national trends reporter for The Hill with a masters from the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism, 1-11-2023, "More than 8 in 10 nursing homes face staffing shortages: survey", Hill, https://thehill.com/changing-america/well-being/longevity/3809450-more-than-8-in-10-nursing-homes-face-staffing-shortages-survey/]/Kankee

Most nursing homes in the United States are suffering from staff shortages and struggling to attract new employees, according to a new survey on the industry. Currently, 86 percent of nursing homes in the U.S are experiencing moderate to severe staffing shortages and 96 percent are struggling to hire additional staff, according to the American Health Care Association’s (AHCA) State of the Nursing Home Industry survey. The AHCA, a federation of state healthcare organizations that oversee about 14,000 nursing homes and assisted-living communities, surveyed 524 nursing home providers for the analysis. As a result, survey crafters found that staffing and economic issues are rampant throughout the industry, sparking concerns among providers that they won’t be able to comply with federal staffing mandates. The survey also found that 9 out of 10 nursing homes have increased their wages or offered bonuses to recruit or retain staff. But despite those efforts, 78 percent of nursing homes admitted in the survey that they have had to hire temporary agency staff to meet the needs of their facilities. Chronic understaffing in nursing homes has been a decade-long issue with the COVID-19 pandemic shining a light on the depth of the problem. But AHCA leadership said during a Wednesday press conference the struggle to get workers into long-term care has “never been like this.” In fact, 97 percent of nursing homes said that a lack of interested or qualified candidates is a “major obstacle” in hiring new nursing home or assisted living facility staff. “The reality is the workforce shortage is now creating serious access issues as facilities do not have the staff to care for the number of residents that they did before,” Phil Fogg, board chair at the AHCA and CEO of the Marquis Companies, said during the press conference. “You’re literally seeing facilities close because they cannot get the staff to not only meet their state and federal requirements but to care for the people within that community,” Fogg added. According to the survey, more than half of nursing homes are operating at a financial loss with 51 percent of nursing homes reporting that they do not believe they will be able to stay open for another year at their current pace.

#### Wage increases don’t help recruitment

Stulick 24 [Amy Stulick, reporter for Skilled Nursing News with a BA from Buffalo State College, 3-8-2024, "‘Feel Like a Risk’: Nursing Home Operators Appear To Reduce Wage Increases Compared to 2023,” Skilled Nursing News, https://skillednursingnews.com/2024/03/feel-like-a-risk-nursing-home-operators-appear-to-reduce-wage-increases-compared-to-2023/]/Kankee

Labor costs continue to be top of mind for nursing home operators as the workforce shortage persists and operators anticipate the finalized version of the federal minimum staffing rule. Operators reported average wage increases for their employees of 4.43% in 2023, dropping to 3.64% thus far for 2024, according to the Ziegler CFO Hotline survey conducted in February. “Wage pressure continues to rise and in every employee engagement survey, employees feel they are not paid competitively,” one respondent said. And yet, another respondent said that given nursing pressures, budgeted increases of 3% feel like a risk. Moreover, meaningful moves in wages over the past two years have had little impact on overall recruitment and retention, along with reduction in agency utilization, this respondent noted. Generally, nurse wage increases went beyond 3% as operators have tried to stay competitive, respondents said. Others said their nurses, certified nursing aides and resident aides received 12% wage adjustment increases. “For our new fiscal year starting on April 1, no employee will make less than $15 per hour. We also offer shift [differentials] of $2 per hour for nights and an additional $2 per hour for weekends,” a respondent told Ziegler. “We offer shift [differentials] to all employees, not just health care employees … [but] attracting dietary staff is still a struggle.” Overall the budget dedicated to employee wages and benefits was on average nearly 56%, although the budget range for this category widely varied between respondents. The minimum devoted to wages and benefits was 15% while the maximum was 87%.

### AT: Prisoners

#### Obfuscation of slaves as workers reinforces the carceral state

Kilgore 23 [Ivan Kilgore, California prisoner, author, and Founder United Black Family Scholarship Foundation with an associate’s degree in business administration and management from Education Los Medanos Community College, 5-11-2023, "Against 'Work'", https://inquest.org/against-work/]/Kankee

Breakin’ the Chains This brings me to my central argument, derived from decades of experience organizing side-by-side with my fellow prisoners: To effectively challenge carceral violence, we must embrace a Black abolitionist politic that is defined both against “work” and against identifying ourselves as “workers.” As Frank B. Wilderson III and other Black Studies scholars have shown, there are fundamental differences between the political category of the “worker” and that of the “slave.” The worker is exploited at best, yet only shot, brutalized, or imprisoned when they engage in sabotage or forceful strike. By contrast, the slave is the object of gratuitous violence as a perpetual structural constraint. Having been rendered civilly dead by U.S. law, I am to the state as the slave was to the plantation master, subject to the same relation of coercive violence and enveloping terror. Every movement I make carries with it the possibility of the authority’s lash. I am the bodily raw material that gives the prison–industrial complex purpose and social meaning. From this position, the act of naming myself—a slave held captive by the state—as “worker” displaces the gravity of my situation, obscuring the nature and extent of carceral violence. Further, as I have attempted to show in this essay, prison work assignments, presented to us as privileges, serve to lure us into conformity with the prison’s disciplinary regime, amounting to complicity and participation in the production of our own continued enslavement. When attempting to organize as the worker-on-strike instead of the slave-in-revolt, prisoners face two essential dilemmas. First, a prison strike must be organized differently than other united workplace actions, requiring a far greater level of solidarity from those who are not in our position (non-imprisoned people). If our goal is to clog the arteries of the prison regime, it might be more effective to choose methods that interrupt the prison’s reproduction from the outside. While we are staging sit-ins, boycotts, stoppages, and refusing trays inside, free-world activists can occupy the offices of a Department of Corrections, stage protests at a prison warden’s private house, or stage sit-ins in the buildings of government institutions and corporations. In short, free-world activists must assume more of the risks. They must engage in strategic civil disobedience that directly (not just symbolically) disrupts the smooth functioning of the prisoncrat’s political-industrial machine. Second, and more fundamentally, the category of the “worker-on-strike”—whose struggle proceeds on the terrain of labor/economics/wages—fails to grasp the culturally specific function of captivity in the production of U.S. (racial) freedom and (white) civilizational ascendancy over the wretched of the earth. In the antebellum South, plantation slavery was not only an institution for the production of material goods at a cheap cost for the ruling class. It established the very structure through which white freedom was, and is, made legible. The machinery of slavery was foundational to the non-slave’s experience of freedom. In fact, white freedom and life have always been produced in opposition to Black unfreedom and death. Our struggle, then, cannot be waged on solely, or even primarily, economic terrain. It must aim first and foremost to abolish the white supremacist carceral apparatus that cages, separates, and disappears us from our communities. The true social significance of the Thirteenth Amendment penal exception (authorizing slavery as punishment for a crime) can only be fully understood when we consider the ways in which our political and economic institutions actively work to create criminogenic conditions. The prison itself does this in large part through starvation. When circumstances are such that a human being is compelled to steal food from the kitchen in order to compensate for what is not on our trays—or when circumstances, due to our meager pay (or no pay at all), do not afford us the means to make ends meet—the structural environment reinforces a belief that we must resort to some sort of criminal(ized) and/or deceptive behavior to accomplish our goals. The effect is to diminish social solidarity, intensify generalized distrust and paranoia, and enhance the capacity of the prison to police our behavior and impose punishments. Philosopher Raymond Aron once wrote, “Man is essentially a creature who works; if he works under inhumane conditions, he is dehumanized, because he ceases to perform the activity that, given proper conditions, constitutes his humanity.” Work not only loses its human quality where made detestable by slavery, but also alienates the prisoner and prevents him/her from gaining the value of work ethic. A central contradiction of prison life, then, is that to realize the true value of work—that is, the dignity and self-improvement that come from freely doing and making things in community with others—we have no choice but to first reject the worker identity, at least in the twisted, degraded form it has assumed under present carceral conditions.

#### False worker classification of prisoners obscures the underlying master-slave relationship and black genocide via the carceral state

Kilgore 23 [Ivan Kilgore, California prisoner, author, and Founder United Black Family Scholarship Foundation with an associate’s degree in business administration and management from Education Los Medanos Community College, 2023, “Not Worker, But Chattel,” Real Cost of Prisons, https://realcostofprisons.org/writing/kilgore-not-worker-but-chattel.pdf]/Kankee

In essence, the hunger strikes exemplified what abolitionist Ruthie Gilmore describes as the mobilization of the forms of dual power already latent in colonized and oppressed communities; the disruptive potential of organizing ourselves as rebel slaves. She explains: Power is not a thing but rather a capacity composed of active and changing relationships enabling a person, group, or institution to compel others to do things they would not do on their own (such as be happy, or pay taxes, or go to war). Ordinarily, activists focus on taking power, as though the entire political setup were really a matter of ‘it’ (structure) versus ‘us’ (agency). But if the structureagency opposition isn’t actually how things really work, then perhaps politics is more complicated, and therefore open to more hopeful action. People can and do make power through, for example, developing capacities in organizations. But that’s not enough, because all an individual organization can do on its own is tweak Armageddon. When the capacities resulting from purposeful action are combined toward ends greater than mission statements or other provisional limits, powerful alignments begin to shake the ground. In other words, movement happens.4 As emblematic as the hunger strikes were in demonstrating how counter-state forms of power are fortified, which Gilmore argues succinctly in the above passage, we still have our work cut out for us. The entire structure of prison slavery/genocide must be challenged as a whole. I believe it is important that we acknowledge the policing and imprisonment regime as the central target we rally around and develop the capacities of “power” that reside—dormant, always —within our communities. Just as it took slaves refusing trays, street protestors, progressive lawyers, university workers, and many others to build the 2011/13 resistance and provide documented evidence that long term solitary confinement is psychologically damaging and “cruel and unusual punishment,” so too will the same effort be required to demonstrate that prison slavery in fact is programmatic, low-intensity Black genocide more generally. Notably, the recent 2016 and 2018 nationwide prison strikes show promise. But we need more. We need to build a mass movement that wages an offensive for genocide abolition. What is needed is not merely slavery abolition, but the abolition of the prison as a lethal mechanism of social death. We must resist the seductions of work in an environment of forced isolation and (the alwayspresent-potential for) extermination. In turn, we must not misconstrue our status as mere exploited workers, or model our operations on the lessons of striking wage workers. The position of the (prison) slave is a structural juncture of improvised unity with which we can all rally behind, whether locked in the gulag already, or as peoples struggling together on the outside to avoid/defend- against/abolish the possibility of capture. There is a power that we can utilize, a power that can be unleashed in the domino effect of the revolting slave. This is how Black political consciousness is formed—from the everyday to the extraordinary, in the anti-dialectic between master and slave, we continue to build the grounds upon which the former’s disintegration becomes imperative. The chattel convict is thus from the moment of arrest positioned in such a way as to develop Black politics, as imprisoned people are all subjected to the gratuitous terror of the state. We are not workers for the most part. We are enslaved. Captive. Captured. Property of the U.S. nation state. The raw materials disappeared to give shape to white democracy’s freedom. Free world abolitionists will you join in the dance with social death?5

#### Embrace an abolitionist anti-work ethic to deconstruct white carceral supremacy – better wages are a hollow hope that fail to challenge the prison industrial complex

Kilgore 23 [Ivan Kilgore, California prisoner, author, and Founder United Black Family Scholarship Foundation with an associate’s degree in business administration and management from Education Los Medanos Community College, 2023, “Not Worker, But Chattel,” Real Cost of Prisons, https://realcostofprisons.org/writing/kilgore-not-worker-but-chattel.pdf]/Kankee

There are two essential dilemmas that prisoners face when organizing as the worker-on-strike instead of the slave-in-revolt. One is that a prison strike must be organized differently, its operations conducted differently, and requires a level of active solidarity (from others not in our position, non-imprisoned people) far greater than any other united workplace action. Many on the outside need to take up more of the risk. For example, there are numerous ways that free-world people can participate in a prison strike that does not mistake symbolic action for direct, disruptive tactics. We need mass civil disobedience, not more civic performance. If our goal is to clog the arteries of the prison regime from within, it might be more effective to choose methods that interrupt the prison’s reproduction from without. While we are staging sit-ins, boycotts, stoppages, and refusing trays inside, free-world activists could occupy the offices of a Department of Corrections, stage protests at a prison warden’s private house, or stage sit-ins in the buildings of government institutions and corporations that benefit from the smooth functioning of the prisoncrat’s political-industrial machine. As an outside comrade once pointed out, “phone zaps” are effective in certain historical situations, but disrupting this fascist regime requires a whole lot more. As Frank B. Wilderson argues, the worker is exploited at best, yet only shot, brutalized, or imprisoned because they engage in sabotage or forceful strike. The slave however is rendered the object of gratuitous violence as a perpetual structural constant. By missing this point and defining ourselves as imprisoned “workers,” we open ourselves up to the public’s misrecognition of the levels of risk involved with organizing on the inside. The universalist category of the worker also fails to grasp the centrality of our captivity to the making of U.S. society’s sense of (racial) freedom and (white) civilizational ascendency over the wretched of the earth. This, in fact, brings me to my second point, a thing much more complex to explain. That is, the fact that our enslavement by the State holds a culturally specific purpose for the society that appears driven to physically disappear us. In the antebellum South, plantation slavery was not only an institution for the production of material goods at a cheap cost for the ruling class. Slavery established the very structure through which white freedom was, and is, made legible. The machinery of slavery was foundational to the non-slave’s experience of freedom at a psycho-social level. In fact, there would be no need to use the word “freedom” at all had there not first been the creation of a structural position called the Slave. It has always been white freedom and life produced in opposition to Black unfreedom and death. State power is not only repressive but productive of social relations. It creates traps that lure us into complicity and participation whether it is for our own benefit or not. We need to understand work in prisons as such, and promote an abolitionist politic that is profoundly anti-work. We can’t see the struggle as merely a fight for better wages, because the majority of us don’t have wages at all. We have to abolish the apparatus that cages us, separates us from our families, and disappears us from our communities. We need a movement that thinks not only in terms of labor/economics, but a movement that challenges the carceral foundations of the white supremacist state. Often when I tell fellow prisoners of my reluctance to work in one of the many prison factories or so-called “job assignments,” I am looked upon as if I have said something foolish. They always defer to the question of “Why?” As if being exploited for pennies on the dollar or no wage at all for our labor is an acceptable situation. In answering their question, I explain to them my experience in the Seminole County Jail in Wewoka, Oklahoma.

#### Prisoners lack the legal classification as workers

Bowman 24 [Tyler Bowman, incarcerated writer and author, March/April 2024, "Forced Labor vs. Forced Idleness,” Dollars and Sense, https://www.dollarsandsense.org/archives/2024/0324bowman.html]/Kankee

Work, or Else Money has dictated the state of the U.S. prison system since its inception. In order for our current system to succeed under its own standards, it must not only maintain an adequate population, but also ensure that those who are incarcerated perform labor. In order to achieve this goal, laws are in place that essentially force prisoners to work under the threat of punishment. North Carolina General Statutes Section 148-26, “State policy on employment of prisoners,” reads: a) It is declared to be public policy of the state of North Carolina that all able-bodied prison inmates shall be required to perform diligently all work assignments provided for them. The failure of any inmate to perform such a work assignment may result in disciplinary action. Work assignments and employment shall be for the public benefit to reduce the cost of maintaining the inmate population while enabling inmates to acquire or retain skills and work habits needed to secure honest employment after their release. To me it’s quite the conundrum how our prison system is able to justify forcing prisoners to work when the people who run prisons will barely lift a finger when it comes to educating those very same prisoners. Why not “force” the incarcerated to gain an education as well? Education in prisons is factually proven to reduce recidivism. Is it because that would then lessen the quantity of their cheap labor pool? Our current system uses these people, myself included, forcing them to use their bodies and not their minds. To simply do, and not think. The aforementioned statute also went on to state that work assignments are to equip prisoners with what would be considered transferable skills. While there are indeed some jobs that meet this requirement, most are actually redundant and menial in nature. For the majority of inmate laborers, few skills are learned during their incarceration that are relevant to the real-world labor market. I understand that most of the jobs provided in prison are all necessary and important for running the facility and keeping it functioning efficiently. We do need janitors to keep the prison clean, people to cook food and wash dishes, fold and pass out clothes, along with other essential duties. But it’s the fact that we’re paid so little, given barely any responsibilities, and asked to find fulfillment in jobs that are beneath many prisoners’ potential and capabilities, that degrades us as humans. Not Protected Nonworkers by law, prison laborers are not entitled to the rights and protections of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Among many protections, this act assures that legal workers receive a lawful minimum wage and can expect to work during reasonable hours. With a national average pay of only 52 cents an hour, I’d say that prisoners are far from receiving a respectable minimum wage. Compared to the federal minimum wage of $7.25 an hour—which in today’s labor market, one where salaries are dictated more by the employees than the companies, few people are working for that little—prisoners get paid the slightest fraction of the pay of their unincarcerated counterparts. In our society the quality of work, as well as the level of appreciation an employer has for an employee, is frequently translated into how much they are paid. Prison is designed as a dehumanizing environment, but it doesn’t have to be. Why not reward and show appreciation to prisoners who work hard, and show a genuine interest in preparing for their return into society? Let’s pay them respectable wages, and teach them relevant skills and financial literacy, so that they might actually have a chance of success upon release. Isn’t that outcome—their success—for the betterment of the community as well? The scary reality is that the United States has allowed the prison industry to grow in such a way that we’ve become dependent upon it economically. Think about all the people employed by or dependent on the criminal justice system, think about the private prisons, the financial and telecommunications service companies such as JPay and GTL, that would be drastically impacted by a significant reduction in the prison population. In 2020, there were over two million people incarcerated. Why so many? Are Americans just that bad of people, or are our laws and justice system flawed? The current strategy of our prison system is to extract as much revenue as possible (usually for outside, private, for-profit companies) and to save the state and federal governments as much as possible. To achieve this, convicts are routinely leased or farmed out to other agencies such as the Department of Transportation. Fundamentally, we as a society need to be making a conscious effort to change this philosophy that thrives from borderline slave labor. Let us invest in our prisons and invest in our prisoners in ways that will ultimately reduce prison populations, reduce prison violence, and reduce the heavy burden placed on taxpayers to maintain the backwards prison culture of today. Incarcerated people who work should be treated as lawful employees. But, because we are not, we are not afforded any of the same benefits as those who are. This is yet another violation of prisoners’ rights that perpetuates recidivism. Incentives and Privileges, Not Benefits North Carolina’s sentencing guidelines require that people who’ve been convicted of a crime must do at least the minimum amount of time they were sentenced to. This practice is known as mandatory minimums. When sentenced in North Carolina, there are ranges, based on aggravating and mitigating variables, that have a minimum and a maximum amount of time for that sentence to be completed. For example: You commit a crime and are sentenced to five to seven years, you are doing every minute of that five years, and that’s if you’re on your best behavior. If you’re not, you’ll do anywhere after five, up to seven years. If you do all of your potential sentence, that’s that we refer to as “maxing out” your bid. Getting in trouble, or not participating in work or education assignments, is a good way to max out. In what is often referred to as “the old days,” or “under the old law,” a prisoner used to be able to work their way out the door, meaning if they held a job and stayed out of trouble, they could earn their freedom sooner and go home. With the implementation of mandatory minimums back in the 1990s, this is no longer the case. An inmate can go his entire sentence without getting into trouble, but he will not go home any sooner than his minimum. Doesn’t sound very motivating, does it? Many people and organizations, such as Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM), oppose this. One of the strategies that the state uses to incentivize prisoners to go along with their work assignments and to stay out of trouble is to grant what’s referred to as “earned time.” These are credited days that are applied to a prisoner’s sentence in order to help get them to their minimums. Losing your job means no longer earning these credits, or at least significantly less, while getting into trouble allows administration to take away the earned time that a prisoner has already gained. More important than these paltry incentives are the few privileges that we’re allotted, which, at least to me and most fellow prisoners that I know, encourage us to “walk the line.” These include: phone calls, visits, canteen, tablets, and recreation time, to name a handful. Step out of line and you’re subject to lose some, if not all, of these. So, instead of actual worker benefits such as Social Security and Medicare, we’re stuck with minor rewards to keep us in line. Federal Prison Industries (FPI) is a federally-owned corporation that “employs” federal prisoners to make goods for sale to the federal government. Most prison systems at the state level have equivalents; North Carolina’s is called Correction Enterprises and uses state prisoners to perform similar tasks of producing goods for sale to the state’s government. Because inmates get paid so little and are not classified as actual employees (although I noticed in the North Carolina statutes that prisoner-laborers were sometimes referred to as “employees”), in most cases, inmate labor does not constitute covered employment. What this translates to is real-world advantages for these federal and state corporations, such as not having to pay their share of any FICA taxes, which is a conscious and strategic effort on their part to keep operating costs low. Not funding their share of inmates’ eventual use of Social Security and Medicare allows these prison industries to enjoy the existence of a steady supply of cheap labor, and keep their workers disadvantaged, both inside prison and after their release, further fueling the cycle. Imagine you’re a prisoner and you’ve worked 20 years at various jobs throughout your sentence. You worked hard, did what’s expected, earned your pennies, earned your credit-days, then finally, finally, are released back out into society. You’re much older than you were going in, and you do have all those years of work experience. But, in the real world how much weight do those menial tasks, or in some cases actual skilled labor, hold with an employer? The harsh reality hits you. You’ve done nothing that’s prepared you for the real-world labor market. That’s not even the worst part. The real kick in the teeth comes when you eventually go and apply for Social Security, only to realize you did not receive a single quarterly credit during all of those years of labor. And then you learn that your pay was always so low, intentionally, in order to prevent you from reaching the minimum annual wage limit required. Not only are you not receiving any benefits from your years of incarcerated labor, but those same benefits could have gone to your spouse, children, or parents if you were to die. I’m not talking just Social Security here, either, but Medicare and disability benefits as well. Benefits that many prisoners might assume they’re earning while performing incarcerated labor. This assumption is wrong. An article in the South Carolina Law Review entitled “But Don’t Tell Social Security” explains the situation perfectly: Inmate Labor does not earn toward benefits for two reasons: first, it is carved out of the statute defining covered employment, and second, even when it may constitute covered employment (as with some Prison Industry Enhancement Certification Program jobs), most inmates do not earn sufficient income to surpass the statutory thresholds. I find it unnecessary to withhold benefits that would aid people in poverty. I’m even more confused, though, as to why our system refuses to grant the bare minimum to human beings who are already disadvantaged enough as it is, and who are statistically more likely to turn to crime just to survive. A study by the Brookings Institution found that the majority of ex-cons receive salaries at or below the minimum wage. These benefits could be the difference between an ex-con returning to prison or being a contributing member of society. Imagine my own surprise while doing research for this article, when I began to understand the true extent of how disadvantaged I’ll be when I get out. I have three consecutive sentences; if I have to do the mandatory minimums on each of those, I won’t be back out in society until the year 2057, when I’m 64 years old. I, along with many others, won’t qualify for Social Security or Medicare even though it’s fair to say I will have worked, in some capacity, most of my life. The discriminatory difference being that I performed my labors behind bars, generating revenue—or cuttings costs—for what could strongly be debated as my “employer.” The Big Picture One of the biggest, most important battles of criminal justice today should be changing incarcerated laborers’ classification to legal workers. This would provide the same rights and benefits as non-inmate labor and allow prisoners to earn a “livable” wage. I’m aware that this is a very tough sell politically, but I believe that only highlights how uninformed the public is on this issue. Pay prisoners a fair wage but charge them for their room and board. Give them bills, garnish their pay, allow them responsibilities. The culture of simply locking us up and throwing away the key is not a sustainable system, the proof of this being how overcrowded and understaffed our prison system is. We should be maximizing the chances of a prisoner getting out and paying taxes from their job, not burdening the state and its citizens with paying roughly $31,000 a year per prisoner.

#### Improvements in prison labor whitewash systems of white supremacist control – small improvements in “work” reinforce slavery through the lens of rehabilitation, not exploitation

Jou 24 [Chin Jou, Associate Professor and Brackenridge Endowed Chair in Interdisciplinary Humanities at UT San Antonio, 01-15-2024, "Greenwashing “Modern Day Slavery” through the Mystique of Prison Farm Labor", Cambridge Core, https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-labor-and-working-class-history/article/greenwashing-modern-day-slavery-through-the-mystique-of-prison-farm-labor/5C66A5DC08405FD09D9F08D99BF4113D]/Kankee

Conclusion That striking incarcerated workers have called their condition “prison slavery” is significant, and should not be dismissed as hyperbole. It suggests that, among incarcerated African Americans, protesting compulsory labor is not solely a matter of securing practical improvements such as wage increases and better working conditions. These protests reflect, as anthropologist Orisanmi Burton has recently argued about Black-led prison rebellions, strike participants’ understanding of prisons as a site of “white supremacist systems of power,” and their attempts to carve out “zones of autonomy, freedom, and liberation” within prisons.Footnote92 If, as incarcerated Black radicals have maintained, prisons are sites of modern-day slavery, there is no dimension of prison life that is more evocative of planation slavery than the farms and “gardens” across the United States where disproportionately Black and brown bodies are forced to work to maintain prisons and, in some cases, grow food for American consumers. Seeing contemporary, compulsory prison agricultural labor as analogous to antebellum field slavery also has major implications for what to make of media coverage on prison farms. News stories about prison farms, such as those described at the outset of this article, are no longer benign or uplifting accounts of the invigorating outdoors and farm-fresh food in otherwise grim environments. Rather, they become greenwashed narratives that, even if unintentionally, do the work of obscuring connections between prison agricultural labor and field slavery by framing such labor as wholesome and rehabilitative (notwithstanding an eighty-three percent recidivism rate at state prisons nationwide).Footnote93 That the news organizations that have produced such stories include leading, national print media sources like the New York Times and the Washington Post, and National Public Radio, which is syndicated to over one thousand public radio stations across the United States and reaches an audience of forty-four million, raises the imperative for critically examining media narratives of prison farm labor.Footnote94 While the contemporary media landscape is diverse, and people consume news from a multitude of sources, such media organizations carry considerable cultural capital and can still shape Americans’ ideas about prison life and conditions, especially if readers and listeners do not have firsthand experiences with incarceration. Of course, no relatively short news article or six-minute radio story can include all the intricacies of prison labor policies and practices, but news organizations could, at the very least, clarify whether incarcerated people are being forced or coerced into working, and the wages—if any—they are earning. The elision of such details can discourage Americans from critically engaging with uncomfortable, urgent questions about prison conditions and carceral labor practices that have been justifiably called “modern-day slavery.”

#### Abolition is key – legal reforms to stop carceral slavery fail

Goodwin 19 [Michele Goodwin, Chancellor’s Professor of Law and Founding Director of the Center for Biotechnology and Global Health Policy at UC Irvine, 2019, “THE THIRTEENTH AMENDMENT: MODERN SLAVERY, CAPITALISM, AND MASS INCARCERATION,” Cornell Law Review, https://live-cornell-law-review.pantheonsite.io/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Goodwin-final-2.pdf]/Kankee

5. Social Movements: The Role of Activists Finally, some scholars and activists remain skeptical that the traditional means of shifting law can effectuate change within the criminal justice system; especially, institutionalized slavery. Thus, some scholars argue for the complete abolishment of prisons, which would eliminate altogether the circumstances that provide for prison labor and slavery behind bars. That is, if prisons no longer exist or if the entire system were abolished and fundamentally rehabilitated, then there is no slavery for the punishment of crime because there, presumably, would be no punishment. This argument finds purchase in the work of Allegra M. McLeod. In her article Prison Abolition and Grounded Justice, she argues: Two hundred and forty years of slavery and ninety years of legalized segregation, enforced in large measure through criminal law administration, render U.S. carceral and punitive policing practices less amenable to the reforms undertaken, for example, in Scandinavian countries, which have more substantially humanized their prisons.510 McLeod both equates the prison system to slavery and argues that refining these systems to make them more “humanized” will fail to address the more significant, underlying issues, such as racism, classism, and the persistence of racial hierarchy forged in both law and practice in the United States. She is right. Indeed, “the racial dynamics associated with incarceration and punitive policing in the United States and the practices of racial dehumanization through which U.S. carceral and policing institutions developed” underscore the challenges of adopting a traditional legal framework to protect the human rights and dignity of Black individuals (and all others) funneled through a criminal justice system that profits off of punishment.511 Sadly, state legislatures, Congress, and the Supreme Court have each been complicit in perpetuating the systems of American slavery. McCleod argues that these institutions cannot provide the corrective(s) fundamentally required to render justice for Americans caught in the most pernicious aspects of the criminal justice system, precisely because the modern prison system is built upon the dehumanization of the Black body.512 Further, the dehumanization and denigration of the Black body was not only inherent to slavery, but all other systems and institutions that survived and thrived as its progeny, including the modernday criminal justice system. A fundamental tenet of the prison abolition movement is that slavery and the criminal justice system are deeply intertwined and connected through law and practice. On one hand, the criminal justice system is deeply embedded in the institution of slavery. On the other, the institution of slavery is fueled by the criminal justice system. Quite possibly, an overhaul is not enough to salvage human rights and promote human dignity, and perhaps, according to modern abolitionists, both systems should be abolished. C. Conclusion

#### The aff is unaffordable, decreases jobs, and encourages crime

Heben 21 [Ethan Heben, law clerk with a BS in English from the United States Naval Academy, a master's in business administration degree from the College of William & Mary Mason School of Business, and a JD from the University of Virginia School of Law, 2021, “Prisoners as "Quasi-Employees,” University of Florida Journal of Law & Public Policy, https://scholarship.law.ufl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1453&context=jlpp]/Kankee

B. Arguments Against Classifying Prisoners as "Employees" Under FLSA Any view that would outright give prisoners full rights under the FLSA necessarily ignores certain key stakeholders outside of prisoners themselves, including correctional officers, prison administrators, lawmakers, victims of crimes, the government, and the public-at-large. First, "[p]rison administrators and correctional officers have a legitimate interest in maintaining order within the prison."1 33 This order necessitates "limiting the number of prisoners who can gather at a given time, where they can gather, and at what times they can gather," which in turn severely limits the practicality of traditional union organizing and negotiation methods.1 34 For example, the power of labor strikes in the prison setting "cannot be hermetically sealed off from other aspects of imprisonment, in particular considerations of authority and discipline."1 3 Instead of striking for fair wages, inmates, if granted the power to strike, may do so over prison conditions unrelated to their work, causing administrability and disciplinary problems within these facilities. 136 Second, opening the door to FLSA employment status would not only allow prisoners to demand the minimum wage-which itself raises sustainability concerns-but also would open the door for prisoners to sue for worker's compensation, unemployment benefits, vacations, overtime, and incentive pay.1 3 7 These additional costs could end up burdening the state-in a severely negative manner-which would adversely affect taxpayers. 138 There are other serious economic restraints preventing the United States from recognizing prisoners under the FLSA. To do so would take away from the internationally and constitutionally recognized power of the State to force prisoners to work. Also, private companies may be less willing to hire prison laborers if forced to pay market rates or even minimum wages due to the regulatory hurdles required to initiate and maintain a prison laborer program. Therefore, to keep the incentivization for hiring prison laborers at the appropriate levels needed to meet objectives such as reduced recidivism, there naturally needs to be a correlating discount built into the prison labor force. Third, the payment of these benefits could have other unintended consequences, such as reducing the deterrent effects of incarceration in general and increasing the frequency of crime in communities-making it more profitable for some citizens to spend time in prison than out in the civilian population.1 39 Studies have shown that "crimes are more likely to be committed by unemployed persons who would stand to benefit economically from either perpetrating crime or prison employment."1 40 Finally, Congress's silence on the treatment of prisoners in the language of the statute and subsequent inaction strongly suggests that it was not Congress's intent for the FLSA-in its current form-to extend to prisoners.141 Some proponents of the prison industry go even further, arguing that "managing wages and barring union activity" should not only be allowed but also encouraged as necessary to "maintain competitive advantage over the off-shore alternatives."142 The treatment of prison labor under the FLSA is currently ambiguous1 4 3 and therefore is ready for new legislation. Arguments on each side of the current dichotomy are strong, and many are valid.' 4 4 This Article advocates that a new legal regime should step away from the definition of "employee" under FLSA and craft specific legislation around the quasi-employee nature of prisoners. 145 This new legal regime needs to take into account all the key stakeholders, including prisoners, prisoners' families, prison administrators, correctional officers, victims, victims' families, the government, and the public.' 4 6 It must acknowledge the unique nature of prisoners and their need for human dignity and abandon the unnecessary debate about the word "employee." IV. THE STATUS QUO MUST CHANGE

#### Living wages for prisoners destroy the economy and government budgets

Anderson 23 [Meg Anderson, NPR reporter with a MA in journalism from Northwestern, 11-12-2023, "Colorado banned forced prison labor 5 years ago. Prisoners say it's still happening", NPR, https://www.npr.org/2023/11/13/1210564359/slavery-prison-forced-labor-movement]/Kankee

Prison labor offsets the costs of mass incarceration In Colorado, skeptics of the change to the state's constitution worried mostly that court-mandated community service and other work programs could inadvertently be affected. Michael Gibson-Light, an assistant professor of sociology and criminology at the University of Denver, thinks there's another reason why prison labor is difficult to dismantle. Much of the work of prison maintenance — cooking, cleaning, laundry, grounds keeping — is done by the people being held there, for little and sometimes no pay. "If that flow of cheap or free labor were to stop, I think the fear is that the entire institution would possibly need to shut down," Gibson-Light says. "It's not an unrealistic fear because speaking to the inertia of this whole system, this has been the way that we've manned these facilities for generations. And so to suddenly stop, it would be a budgetary nightmare." Prison workers produce at least $11 billion a year in goods and services across the country, according to the ACLU report. That labor offsets the cost of the prison system. Some government officials in states like Florida and California, where measures to ban slavery outright have been introduced, have made this argument. In Florida, a former county commissioner told The Florida Times-Union: "There's no way we can take care of our facilities, our roads, our ditches, if we didn't have inmate labor. ... We could not tax our citizens enough to replace the value that the inmate labor contributes to our community." In California, the state's Assembly Appropriations Committee noted in an analysis that if changing its constitution forced the state to pay prisoners minimum wage, it could cost taxpayers billions of dollars per year. But Allen, the Colorado organizer, says the cost is more than just financial.

#### Prisoner minimum wage is unaffordable, cuts prisoner jobs, and causes prison violence

GAO 93 [Government Accountability Office, independent government agency within the legislative branch, conducts auditing and investigative services for Congress, 1993, “Perspectives on Paying the Federal Minimum Wage,” GAO https://www.gao.gov/assets/t-ggd-94-8.pdf]/Kankee

For the most part, inmates in the five prison systems--BOP, Arizona, Florida, Nevada, and Virginia--GAO visited either were not paid or were paid at rates that were substantially less than the federal minimum wage of $4.25 an hour. For example, BOP generally pays its maintenance inmates 12 to 40 cents per hour and its industry inmates 23 cents to $1.15 per hour. Our analysis of data from the Justice Department and others indicated that the nation's other prison systems had similar pay rates for their inmate workers. For example, a nationwide survey done by the Justice Department indicated that prison industry inmates were generally paid a regular rate of less than $1 an hour during 1991. If the five prison systems GAO visited were required to pay minimum wage to their inmate workers and did so without reducing the number of inmate hours worked, they would have to pay hundreds of millions of dollars more each year for inmate labor. Consequently, these prison systems generally regarded minimum wage for prisoner work as unaffordable, even if substantial user fees (e.g., charges for room and board) were imposed on the inmates. Officials from the 20 prison systems GAO contacted consistently identified large-scale cutbacks in inmate labor as a likely and, in their view, dangerous consequence of having to pay minimum wage. They believed that less inmate work would mean more idle time and increased potential for violence and misconduct. On the other hand, some of the organizations GAO visited had a different perspective on inmate pay, based on the idea that prison work experiences should be more like those in the general public. Some organizations also believed that by not paying inmates minimum or prevailing wages, prison industries gain an unfair competitive advantage and/or displace workers who are not imprisoned.