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## **+Wuerl & +Lori Applaud O'Malley (the other one)**

by Michael Sean Winters

Distinctly Catholic

Okay, okay. I am personalizing the issue of raising Maryland's minimum wage. But, the fact is that the Maryland Catholic Conference, which represents the Church in Annapolis and, consequently, reports to Washington's Cardinal Wuerl and Baltimore's Archbishop Lori, as well as Wilmington Bishop Francis Malooly, has strongly endorsed Governor Martin O'Malley's proposal to raise the minimum wage. Governor O'Malley is no relation, at least not this side of the pond, to Boston's Cardinal Sean O'Malley. Here is the statement from the MD Cath Conf:

Bishops of Maryland Urge Fair Treatment of Workers  
Issue Statement on Dignity of Work

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops recognize January as Poverty Awareness Month. In a statement titled "The Dignity of Work," Maryland's Catholic bishops call attention to the needs of the poor and the backbone of Maryland's workforce - the low-wage earner and working families, and urge their fair treatment. Noting that legislation calling for just compensation and a healthy work environment will be prevalent this legislative session, the bishops urge "lawmakers to support final measures that will treat Maryland's workers fairly while sustaining local businesses and the jobs they provide."

"Legislation to raise the state's minimum wage and to allow workers to earn paid sick leave for time worked deserve the serious consideration of our legislature," they wrote.

The Bishops' Statement was released in both English and Spanish (both attached). The Catholic Church advocates for economic and social justice by seeking public policies that are in solidarity with the poor and give priority to the concerns of vulnerable members of our society: the working poor, the unemployed, persons experiencing homelessness, immigrants, persons with disabilities, single mothers,

and the elderly. Through the Maryland Catholic Conference and the parishes, the bishops of Maryland bring the voice of the Catholic Church into the public square.

"As the state's largest private social service provider, we witness in our Catholic ministries the painful reality of those who struggle to keep up with the basic costs of food, rent, utilities and transportation. This desperate cycle cannot end unless we as a society find a way to give all capable men and women the chance to work at a job through which they can live with true independence and dignity. While we hope one day the issue of raising the minimum wage will be addressed at the federal level, we cannot afford to wait in Maryland. As Pope Francis reminds us, 'The dignity of each human person and the pursuit of the common good are concerns which ought to shape all economic policies.' May these concerns guide the decisions of Maryland's legislators this year as they debate these important issues," concluded the bishops.

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