

Bloggers Take Up Minimum Wage Debate In Greensboro for \$9.36

The campaign to **raise the Greensboro minimum wage to \$9.36 an hour** now has a web presence. And, in classic Gate City style, that presence is a blog. The Greensboro Minimum Wage Campaign launched the blog in mid-February, and the site has already attracted plenty of attention from the lively Greensboro blogging community, said Marilyn Baird, one of the leaders of the campaign. The site is part of the campaign's communication plan.

The campaign to raise the minimum wage is gathering signatures required by the **citizens initiative ordinance**. Once they've gathered **5,000 signatures** from registered voters, they will present their petition to the city council. **If the council does not act on it, they are required to put the initiative** on the ballot the **following November**. The figure \$9.36 equals the same buying power, adjusted for inflation, as the minimum wage in 1968.

"Six-fifteen is not enough to raise a family," Baird said. "It is not enough even for just the bare needs."

Baird said **20,000 Greensboro residents work minimum wage-paying jobs**. Many of them have two or three jobs and depend on the government for basic services, she said.

Jill Williams, the former executive director of the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission, is the volunteer responsible for maintaining the blog. The last time she blogged - for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission - she used the platform more as a way to disseminate information to the public. The minimum wage blog is already much more interactive, she said. "It's been more work than I really thought it would be," she said. "In fact, I feel like I really should devote more attention to it."

Conversations on the website have included discussions about **whether it's legal in North Carolina** for a **city to raise its minimum wage**, images of the poor and the impact such a move would have on the economy.

"It's been exciting," Williams said. "Most of the conversations have been pretty civil." The blog is a small part of the campaign's outreach efforts. They are also **partnering with churches** to find volunteers to circulate petitions within faith communities. "The most important outreach is actually the **grassroots organizing**," Williams said. "The blog is actually just a tool to share information about our grassroots activities."

Young volunteers with the campaign will be **taking petitions to area grocery stores** this week and might be planning some spoken-word events designed to advance the cause. All that information will be posted on the blog: **greensborominimumwage.blogspot.com**. Williams said she does not expect to win many converts through blogging, but said it's good to get the discussion out in the open.

"The majority of the people who visit the blog will not be impacted by a raise in the minimum wage and may not be its biggest supporters," she said. Greensboro's blogging community has **included a homeless man**, faux billionaire Percy Walker and the expressively inclined of all political stripes. The forum has become a politically important one. And the message the minimum wage campaign blog wants to convey is simple.

"The message is: \$6.15 is not enough," Baird said.