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News Release

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Board of Supervisors Approves Living Wage Ordinance Draft *Adoption Vote Set for December 16 Meeting*

Responding to the widening economic gap in Santa Clara County, the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, December 9, took a major step forward to creating a Living Wage Ordinance to help lift low-wage earners out of poverty.

The Board approved a draft Living Wage Ordinance that would sets pay at \$19.06 an hour for the workers of for-profit employers who contract with the County. The Living Wage would apply to contracts with employers initiated on or after July 1, 2015.

Proposed by Supervisors Dave Cortese and Ken Yeager, the ordinance is aimed at helping individuals and families who struggle to live and work in Santa Clara County.

“With this ordinance, we’re addressing the growing economic gap for low-wage earners,” Cortese said. “Not only will the ordinance raise the standard of living, but reduce the demand for safety net services that the County provides.”

Contracts with community-based nonprofits would be exempt from the requirement until a Living Wage policy unique to nonprofits can be created with input from stakeholders.

The Board of Supervisors will adopt the final ordinance at the December 16 meeting.

“As the primary provider of safety net services, the County has both a moral and a financial incentive to do what we can to promote fair pay for hard work,” said Supervisor Yeager.

In the next six months, County administrators will review contracts and assess the costs of implementation and to enforce the Living Wage Ordinance and make recommendations as part of the mid-year budget process.

The ordinance also will allow an employer to contribute up to \$4 of the \$19.06 hourly wage to health coverage or retirement benefit.

The ordinance also requires employers to give workers at least one hour of sick leave per 20 hours worked, or up to 12 days a year, for themselves or to care for a family member and to receive up to 5 paid days off for jury duty.

Approximately \$2.5 billion in County contracts will be affected.

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