

## Communication from Public

**Name:** National Employment Law Project  
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**Council File No:** 19-0229-S2  
**Comments for Public Posting:** Please post this letter in support of the fast food ordinance to the council file.

**Rebecca Dixon**  
President & CEO

**National Office**  
PO Box 1779  
New York, NY 10008  
212-285-3025  
www.nelp.org

October 17, 2025

Los Angeles City Council  
201 N. Figueroa Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Council File 19-0229-S2

Dear Councilmembers,

The National Employment Law Project (NELP) urges you to vote in favor of the Fast Food Fair Work Ordinance to support the more than 50,000 fast food cooks and cashiers in Los Angeles. NELP is a nonprofit research, policy, and capacity building organization that for more than 55 years has sought to strengthen protections and build power for workers in the U.S. Together with local, state, and national partners, NELP advances its mission through transformative legal and policy solutions, research, capacity-building, and communications. NELP has long advocated for livable wages and fair work standards for underpaid workers.

In Los Angeles, nine of every ten fast food workers are people of color, and nearly 70 percent are women.<sup>1</sup> Roughly one in three are immigrants.<sup>2</sup> These workers face erratic and unpredictable work schedules, rampant violations of worker protection laws and a lack of paid time off. They have faced constant threats of firings, hours cuts, and even employers' threats to call ICE. The current menace of mass deportation and heavily publicized raids across the country contribute to a culture of fear, further deterring fast food workers from exercising their rights.<sup>3</sup>

The Fast Food Fair Work Ordinance offers solutions to these abuses that benefit fast food workers *and* responsible employers. It would require an annual full day, in-person Know Your Rights training by an independent, trusted third party; offer protection from constantly changing schedules; and require paid time off so workers can attend the training, rest and recover, have time with family, and take care of personal needs.

We know that the Fast Food Fair Work Ordinance will work well for Los Angeles' fast food workers and will not harm businesses. UC Berkeley's analysis of data from nearly a year after California implemented a fast food worker minimum wage of \$20 shows that the new wage standard did not cause restaurants to cut jobs—the policy had no negative effect on

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<sup>1</sup> Kuochih Huang et al., *The Fast-Food Industry and COVID-19 in Los Angeles*, at 13 (March 2021), <https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/The-Fast-Food-Industry-and-COVID-19-in-Los-Angeles.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* at Table 9.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Erica Hellerstein, *California Fast Food Workers Call on Employers to Protect Them from ICE Raids*, EL TIMPANO (Aug. 22, 2025), <https://www.eltimpano.org/newsletter/california-fast-food-workers-call-on-employers-to-protect-them-from-ice-raids/>.

employment in California's fast food industry.<sup>4</sup> The policy also did not result in businesses leaving California. Instead, "the number of fast-food establishments grew faster in California than in the U.S." generally in the quarter after the policy was implemented.<sup>5</sup> While opponents of the statewide fast food minimum wage asserted that it would result in massive job loss, those claims have been retracted,<sup>6</sup> debunked,<sup>7</sup> and derided for cherry picking numbers.<sup>8</sup>

Locally, employers in other industries similarly wrongly predicted that higher standards for workers would result in disastrous outcomes for businesses and the community. For example, area hoteliers forecasted that the industry would suffer nearly 1,500 job losses when Los Angeles adopted a hotel living wage.<sup>9</sup> However, research shows that hotel jobs in Los Angeles increased as the higher minimum wage was implemented.<sup>10</sup>

We firmly believe that the Fast Food Fair Work Ordinance can be a transformative force. By guaranteeing workers training on workplace rights, predictable scheduling and paid time off, Los Angeles has the opportunity to lead in empowering fast food workers and improving their lives, and the lives of their families, customers, and communities.

We strongly urge you to advance this critical motion without any further studies, affirming LA's commitment to fair treatment, security, and dignity for fast food workers, thereby creating a positive impact on the lives of thousands of workers and the broader community.

Sincerely,

Cassandra Gomez  
Senior Staff Attorney  
National Employment Law Project

Paul Sonn  
State Policy Program Director  
National Employment Law Project

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<sup>4</sup> Michael Reich, *Effect of the \$20 California Fast-Food Minimum Wage: Highlights*, at 8-9 (Feb. 24, 2025), <https://irle.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Effects-of-the-20-California-Fast-Food-Minimum-Wage-Highlights-final.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* at 9.

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., Lee Ohanian, *California Loses Nearly 10,000 Fast-Food Jobs After \$20 Minimum Wage Signed Last Fall*, HOOVER INSTITUTION (Apr. 24, 2024), <https://www.hoover.org/research/california-loses-nearly-10000-fast-food-jobs-after-20-minimum-wage-signed-last-fall>.

<sup>7</sup> See Rogé Karma, *The California Job-Killer That Wasn't*, THE ATLANTIC (Dec. 22, 2024), <https://www.theatlantic.com/economy/archive/2024/12/california-minimum-wage-myth/681145/>.

<sup>8</sup> Reich, *supra* note 4, at 10-12.

<sup>9</sup> Soumya Karlamangla, *\$15.37 Minimum Wage Heads to Garcetti's Desk As Hotel Group Complains*, LOS ANGELES TIMES (Oct. 1, 2014), <https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-hotel-wage-public-records-20141001-story.html>.

<sup>10</sup> Nick Stewart-Bloch, *The Sky Never Fell: An Analysis of the Predictions and Outcomes of the 2014 Raise LA Hotel Worker Minimum Wage Ordinance* (Feb. 2024), <https://laane.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/2024-The-Sky-Never-Fell-LAANE.pdf>.