**POWER’s Rural Outreach Project** is in full swing and you may have met Sierra or Jen doing outreach at food banks, laundromats, grocery stores and other sites in Yelm, Rainier, Bucoda, Tenino and Rochester. Please let us know if you would like to talk to us about services or lack of services in your rural community!

Would you and your neighbors, friends, or community group like to host us for a Know Your Rights workshop or Focus Group?

Let us know. You can reach us at 360-352-9716, toll free 866-343-9716, or info@mamapower.org.

DSHS’s mobile CSO bus will be in Rainier at Rainier Emergency Services at Valley Heart Assembly of God, 11318 Vail Cutoff Road SE, Rainier, WA from 9-1 on May 28th. Come and talk with us there.

POWER

Parents Organizing For Welfare and Economic Rights

309 5th Avenue SE, Olympia, WA 98501

[www.mamapower.org](http://www.mamapower.org/)

Find us on Facebook.

POWER is an organization of low-income parents and allies advocating for a strong social safety net while working toward a world where children and care giving are truly valued, and the devastation of poverty has been eradicated.

We are still looking for a site to hold **June’s POWER Outage** – in solidarity with the Rural Outreach Project we will be holding an ice cream social on Monday, June 2nd somewhere in rural Thurston County. Do you have a great spot in your community for us to hold this event?

Below:

1. Were you unable to attend Jennifer Robert’s memorial or attended but had more to say to her memory? Attend a Community Vigil for Jennifer.
2. Fight for increasing the minimum wage on the national level.
3. Fight for increasing the minimum wage locally, Olympia campaign meeting.
4. Corporate greed versus human needs, once again.
5. Our sisters in NYC forward participatory democracy.
6. Olympia Really Really Free Market
7. Village Vans Job Skills Training Positions Open in Olympia

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1. Honoring A Fallen Fighter: Community Vigil For Jennifer Roberts

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|   | Saturday, May 31at 2:00pm - 8:00pm |

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| --- | --- |
|   | Olympia Unitarian Universalist Congregation2300 East End Street NW, Olympia, Washington 98502 |

We invite all who were touched by Jennifer Jo Roberts' work as a community leader to join us in remembering her witness for justice. As a fighter in anti-poverty struggles, a disability rights activist, an environmental justice advocate, and a vital presence in multiple faith communities, Jennifer's legacy runs deep and wide. Come help us celebrate the incredible life of an incredible friend-- and recommit ourselves to carrying on her freedom-fighting spirit in this world.

We'll gather at 2pm to sing, share memories, listen to readings, present art, and stay for as long as it takes us to say goodbye to Jennifer. Potluck will follow the vigil; please bring a contribution if you're able. It's ok to arrive late, leave early, etc. Drop by when you can.

If you or someone you know needs a ride, please let us know here-- we will find you one! Please let us know about any other accessibility needs as well: childcare, language/interpretation, long-distance participation, etc. We don't want anyone to miss out. Kids and babies 100% welcome.

Don't be shy about turning out: even if you never met Jennifer personally, chances are she was fighting for your rights anyway!

MUSICIANS NEEDED. Singers, guitar players, etc., please come and bring your instruments. We'll be singing freedom songs.

Extra special thanks to Olympia Unitarian Universalist Congregation for hosting.

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2. Speaker Boehner refuses to bring a vote on the Fair Minimum Wage Act to the House floor. We want to get as many people as we can to support President Obama and demand that Congress pass a fair minimum wage.

**Forward this email to three friends right now and ask them to sign our petition standing with President Obama calling on Republicans in Congress to pass a fair minimum wage.**

**ADD YOUR NAME HERE -->** [**http://dccc.org/Minimum-Wage-2013**](http://www.dccc.org/minimum-wage-2013?source=em-share_minimum-wage-2013)

You can also stand up for a fair minimum wage by sharing this petition on [**Facebook.**](http://www.facebook.com/sharer.php?u=http://www.dccc.org/minimum-wage-2013?source=fb-share_minimum-wage-2013)     Thank you for your support!

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# **CHN: Minimum Wage Increase Stalls in the Senate**

May 12, 2014

On April 30, Senate Republicans refused to allow a debate on increasing the federal minimum wage by blocking consideration of the Minimum Wage Fairness Act (S. 2223) by a vote of 54-42 (60 votes were required). Senator Bob Corker (R-TN) was the only Republican to join Democrats and Independents in support of the procedural vote. Senator Harry Reid (D-NV) changed his ‘yes’ vote to ‘no’ so that he could bring the bill up again. Failure to pass the $10.10 an hour increase means less income for the nearly 28 million workers and their families who would receive a bigger pay check.

Those working full-time at the current $7.25 an hour minimum wage (40 hours a week for 52 weeks) earn $15,080 a year, over $4,000 below the poverty line for a family of three. Increasing the wage to $10.10 would put those families above the poverty line. S. 2223 would increase the minimum wage in three increments of 95 cents each over two and a half years from the date of passage. Thereafter, the wage would rise with the cost of living. The unconscionably low $2.13 wage for the 6 million tipped workers, half of them in the restaurant industry, has not been increased since 1991. Under S. 2223, it would be increased to $3.00 six months after enactment and then annually adjusted until it equals 70 percent of the minimum wage. Small businesses would benefit from the legislation, which extends the tax deduction for up to $500,000 of business expenses including computer software and rental property through 2016.

Whenever Congress debates an increase in the minimum wage, opponents bring out the old argument that it would hurt small businesses. This time they also use a Congressional Budget Office [report](http://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/attachments/44995-MinimumWage.pdf) that says 500,000 jobs *could be* lost if the wage is increased to $10.10. However, the CBO analysis derives its job loss numbers by taking an average of studies, including older ones that have been discredited. Most recent studies by a range of economists show that there has been virtually no job loss after the last two wage increases in 1996 and 2007. Further, the CBO analysis does not take into account the impacts the increase in wages would have on increased worker productivity and reduced turnover resulting in lower hiring costs.

According to a National Employment Law Project [report](http://www.nelp.org/page/-/Reports/Low-Wage-Recovery-Industry-Employment-Wages-2014-Report.pdf?nocdn=1), during the Great Recession, 22 percent of the jobs lost were low-wage jobs, while 44 percent of the new jobs created during the recovery are low-paying. The report finds that today there are nearly two million fewer jobs in mid- and higher-wage industries than there were before the recession took hold, while there are 1.85 million more jobs in lower-wage industries. That means raising the minimum wage is even more critically important, because more and more workers are in low-wage industries.

Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) has been working to garner support for a lesser increase in the minimum wage using the argument that an increase to $10.10 would hurt small businesses. However, the [Maine Small Business Coalition](http://www.mainesmallbusiness.org/) representing more than 3,600 small business ownersin Maine is urging its members to sign the nation-wide small business leaders’ petition in support of increasing the minimum wage to $10.10. The petition reads in part, “Minimum wage increases boost sales at local businesses as workers buy needed goods and services they could not afford before. … A fair minimum wage makes good sense for our businesses, our workforce, our communities and our nation.”

Lead sponsors of the House and Senate bills, Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), and Representative George Miller (D-CA), are adamant that while there may be room to compromise in terms of other business-related provisions that might be added to their bills, they are unwilling to waver on the $10.10 increase, stating that no poverty wage should be passed into law.

It is the intention of the Senate leadership to keep trying to pass the minimum wage increase. After the April 30 vote, Senator Harkin stated, “This is not the only time you will see the Senate vote on the minimum wage bill this year.” It will be still more difficult to pass the bill in the House, but pressure to act will increase if the Senate is able to pass the bill.

Momentum to increase the federal minimum wage is strengthening as more states pass higher minimum wages. On May 5, Maryland became the latest state to approve a $10.10 minimum wage, increasing in increments to the new rate by July 2018. Twenty-six states and the District of Columbia will have minimum wage rates above the federal level by next year. DC’s will be $10.50 next year and California’s will be $10. Many cities and counties also have adopted higher minimum wages.

The case for increasing the minimum wage was further strengthened when three 2012 Republican Presidential candidates, Mitt Romney, Tim Pawlenty and Rick Santorum, recently expressed support for increasing the wage. “I part company with many of the conservatives in my party on the issue of the minimum wage. I think we ought to raise it,” nominee Romney said on MSNBC’s Friday, May 9 [*Morning Joe*](http://www.msnbc.com/morning-joe/watch/romney-on-minimum-wage-raise-it-251118147687). In another television interview Pawlenty said, “For all the Republicans who come on and talk about, ‘we’re for the blue-collar worker, we’re for the working person,’ there are some basic things that we should be for. One of them is reasonable increase from time to time in the minimum wage.” Santorum later agreed.

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3. Fighting for a Living Wage

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| --- | --- |
|   | May 28 at 7:00pm to May 29 at 9:00pm |

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| --- | --- |
|   | Traditions Fair Trade300 5th Ave SW, Olympia, Washington 98501 |

* This workshop will explore the possibilities and issues to building a campaign for a living wage in Olympia. We will go beyond theory and knowledge and dedicate time to formulate the beginnings of a campaign that is similar to the $15 NOW campaign in Seattle.

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# **4. CHN: Double Standard – House and Senate Willing to Extend Corporate Tax Breaks Without Paying for Them**

May 12, 2014

House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dave Camp (R-MI) wanted to pass a comprehensive tax reform plan. He proposed doing away with many tax breaks in order to pay to continue others and to reduce tax rates. But being specific about ending certain tax breaks wasn’t popular among his colleagues. So his Plan B was to take up the permanent extension of six corporate tax expenditures in committee, without any offsetting revenue increases. The package of six bills cost $310 billion over ten years. On April 29, they all passed with almost straight party line votes. On May 9, perhaps the most popular bill in the group, the tax credit for corporate research (H.R. 4438) was taken up on the House floor and got a resounding, veto-proof majority of [274-131](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2014/roll211.xml). The majority included 62 Democrats, including five of the Ways and Means Democrats who had previously opposed it. The Obama Administration threatened to [veto](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/legislative/sap/113/saphr4438r_20140506.pdf) the measure.

Democrats on the Ways and Means Committee were unified in opposing these bills in committee because they selected out a few corporate tax reductions to make permanent, did not pay for them, and left out many other tax cuts that should be renewed (including low-income credits). They objected to taking up these corporate tax cuts while the House was still refusing to restore the expired unemployment insurance program for the long-term unemployed. Rep. Sandy Levin (D-MI), the senior Democrat on the Committee, spoke in opposition to the six tax bills on these grounds, explicitly raising the millions of long-term jobless still awaiting House action and in desperate need of help.

***For foster youth, a tiny cost must be paid for.*** The Committee set up another such contrast when it took up H.R. 4058, a modest bill “to prevent and address sex trafficking of youth in foster care.” The bill originally had a price tag of $4 million, including $1 million to defray states’ costs in providing youth aging out of foster care with documents they need to get started in life, such as birth certificates, Social Security cards, or medical records. Prior to the mark-up, that provision was deleted because of the cost. Democratic staff were asked for an offsetting cut; they did not provide one, and the section was taken out. Rep. Doggett (D-TX), a strong supporter of the legislation, decried the loss of the funding for documents, and offered an amendment to restore the $1 million. Chairman Camp agreed to try to resolve the problem without making any specific commitments, and Rep. Doggett withdrew his amendment. The foster youth bill was approved by the Committee. Then the Committee went on to pass the unpaid for $310 billion in corporate breaks.

***Pressure to extend more tax cuts in the House.*** The House leadership is taking advantage of the reluctance of many Democrats to vote against popular corporate tax breaks that have been routinely extended in the past without being paid for. By taking them up individually, the price tag for each is easier to swallow. (Although it has been noted that the six bills passed by House Ways and Means would undo about half of the deficit reduction achieved by the upper-income revenue increases in the 2013 fiscal cliff deal.) House Ways and Means member Rep. Pat Tiberi (R-OH) speculated in ***CQ*** that the next bill to reach the House floor might be the permanent increase in small business expense tax breaks (H.R. 4457), costing $73 billion over 10 years.

Analysts have noted that making these tax reductions permanent means they will no longer be counted by the Congressional Budget Office as a source of revenue in future years. That will make it easier for House tax writers to cut corporate tax rates as part of a revenue neutral tax reform plan, because they will no longer have to make up the lost revenue by reducing or eliminating other tax breaks.

***Senate floor action coming soon.*** The Senate has also demonstrated a bipartisan majority in favor of extending tax expenditures without paying for them. It has chosen to renew the full package of about 50 expired items (S. 2260, to be attached to a House revenue bill, H.R. 3474) only for two years, at a cost of $85 billion. The Senate Finance Committee approved this package on April 3 (*see April 14* [***Human Needs Report***](http://www.chn.org/human_needs_report/chn-tax-cut-extenders-pass-senate-finance-committee/)). Majority Leader Reid (D-NV) filed a cloture motion (to limit debate), setting up a first vote on the Senate floor for May 13. That vote will require at least 60 senators to advance the bill so that it can be debated and voted on. If all goes smoothly, the bill could see final approval in the Senate within two weeks.

There are some signs the bill’s path in the Senate may not be altogether smooth. Some Republican senators are trying to collect signatures for a letter seeking an agreement to allow amendments to be offered to the tax extenders bill. Other Republicans are joining with Democrats to oppose amendments, so that the legislation can pass without being tangled up in controversial matters. That dynamic will make it difficult to attach unemployment insurance restoration to the bill. Because of the House leadership’s refusal to put the Senate-passed bill to restore UI for five months on the floor, it needs to be attached to a bill the House wants. As reported in ***Roll Call***, Senator Heller (R-NV) announced that he would try to offer such an amendment.

***Likely outcomes.*** Although the full package of tax cuts being considered in the Senate expired in 2013 or 2014, retroactively extending them by the end of the calendar year will prevent corporate losses. Many observers believe the final resolution will therefore be stalled until a lame duck session after the November election. They are also skeptical that Congress will agree to permanent extensions, but is more likely to take the Senate approach of another temporary fix.

Advocates have asked Congress to pay for these tax cuts by other fair revenue increases, and have especially opposed making them permanent. Getting Congress to pay for them at this point looks like a long shot. In addition, tax justice advocates have pointed out that many of the tax breaks up for extension do not contribute to economic growth; some in fact may encourage jobs and corporate income to flow offshore. Two bills approved by House Ways and Means on April 29 continue tax cuts that effectively gut Congress’ intent to prevent corporate tax avoidance by sheltering income overseas (H.R. 4429, Subpart F Active Financing Exception and H.R. 4464, Controlled Foreign Corporations (CFC) Look-Through Rules). *(For more on this, see the Coalition on Human Needs’* [*April 28 letter*](http://www.chn.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/CHN-tax-extenders-letter-to-HWM-4-28-14.pdf) *to the Ways and Means Committee.)*

Advocates have watched with dismay as these bills have moved forward without being paid for, while millions of the long-term jobless are still going without benefits, and modest help for youth in foster care is stalled. The Senate’s five-month extension was paid for by other cuts. But that bill would provide benefits only through May. If the Senate does not build in more months of long-term unemployment compensation and attach it to a bill the House wants to pass, the hard work of passing the Senate bill will have been in vain. *(For more on unemployment insurance, see April 14*[***Human Needs Report***](http://www.chn.org/human_needs_report/chn-senate-moves-unemployment-insurance/)*.)*

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**5. CVH on the National Scene!**

*We wanted to let you know about two exciting things Community Voices Heard was involved in last week...*

CVH Presents at White House Convening on Participatory Budgeting

On Tuesday, May 13th, Executive Director Sondra Youdelman and Member-Leader Agnes Rivera participated in a 50+-person convening hosted by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, *"Promoting Innovation and Civic Engagement: Exloring Participatory Budgeting in the United States."* This followed the White House's inclusion of participatory budgeting as one of the intiatives promoted in its "Open Government National Action Plan"<http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2013/12/06/united-states-releases-its-second-open-government-national-action-plan> back in December.

Sondra and Agnes both presented on strategies and innovations for outreach, sustained engagement and successful implementation. CVH continues to be the Lead Community Engagement Partner for the Participatory Budgeting NYC,<http://www.pbnyc.org/>, process, which allows people to directly decide how millions of dollars of public monies are spent. PBNYC will expand to over 20 Council districts and will impact $25 million in the next fiscal year. You can download the "tips of the trade" distributed by CVH at the convening here:<https://www.dropbox.com/s/iamh56uatvwu2a8/Strategies%20and%20Innovations%20for%20Outreach.pdf>.

Participants in the convening came from a number of different cities at varied stages of implementing participatory budgeting processes. The NYC delegation consisted of members of the Citywide Steering Committee for PBNYC (the Community Development Project at the Urban Justice Center, Getting Out and Staying Out, the Participatory Budgeting Project, the Right to the City Alliance, the Wise City, and some of our academic partners) as well as representatives from NYC Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito's Office, representatives from NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio's Office, and representatives from the NYC Housing Authority.

We are excited that our work around Participatory Budgeting is being recognized nationally, that it is soon to expand in NYC to over 20 Council districts, and that prospects for broader expansion to new pots of money is likely.

CVH Co-Sponsors Congressional Forum in District 13

On May 14th, back in New York City, CVH then went on to co-sponsor a Congressional Forum in NY's 13th Congressional District (Upper Manhattan and a part of The Bronx) with the Safety Net Project at the Urban Justice Center. The Forum was moderated by Professor Christina Greer of Fordham University and was attended by three candidates: New York State Senator Adriano Espaillat, Congressman Charles Rangel, and Reverend Michael Walrond.

The Forum was designed to focus on issues surrounding poverty. Questions asked included ones regarding SNAP (Food Stamps) funding, public housing support, federal cash assistance programs and work requirements, and more. CVH Board Members John Medina and Gloria Wilson asked two of the questions.

The liveliness of the debate and the tightness of the race garnered a lot of press, including: The Daily News, DNA Info, New York Observer, NY1, and more. It even got covered on The Daily Show by Jon Stewart.

Sadly, Congressman Rangel's telephone skit got more attention in the news than the critical issues at hand. There were, however, some good questions answered in the debate...if you can get through some of the attacks. You can watch the full debate and see for yourself here:<http://vimeo.com/95427939>. The Congressional primary is scheduled to take place on June 24th. To find out more about upcoming elections in NYC, we recommend the DecideNYC and Gotham Gazette websites.

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**6. Olympia Really Really Free Market**

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| --- | --- |
|   | Sunday, June 29at 1:00pm - 4:00pm |

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|   | Sylvester ParkCapital Way S & Legion Way SE, Olympia, Washington 98501 |

Free music, food, comedy. We'll be setting up the Really free market, a free gift economy in action, in which you bring things you'd like to give away and take what you want.

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7. Village Vans has had seven (7) job skills training participants find good paying jobs in the past few months. Hooray!

So, you know what comes next. We’re down to three (3) great participants who can drive and we need to keep our three vans busy all day.

We’ve re-formatted our orientation for new applicants and can almost always start them within five (5) days of confirming eligibility if they’ve lived in Washington for more than five (5) years. It takes us longer to order out of state background reports.

Please send this email on to your co-workers and search your job seekers for those wanting/needing individual, on-going job search support and one-on-one skill building instruction while also getting current work experience at a well-known, respected organization. This program really works!

Thanks for your continued support and I hope your 3-day weekend is warm, fun and rejuvenating.

**Ann Bridges**

**Village Vans Coordinator**

**Intercity Transit**

**526 Pattison St. SE, PO Box 659**

**Olympia, WA 98507-0659**

**360-705-5831 Fax 360-357-6184**

**Abridges@intercitytransit.com**