

**News Release: May 8, 2007**

## **Maryland's Gov. Martin O'Malley Signs Nation's First Living Wage Law**

### ***Measure means pay raise for tens of thousands of Maryland workers***

**Annapolis, Md.--** Gov. Martin O'Malley of Maryland today signed into law the nation's first statewide Living Wage law.

Modeled on ordinances in more than 100 jurisdictions across the country, Maryland's Living Wage law requires big, for-profit service contractors with the state to pay workers on those contracts \$11.30 per hour in urban and suburban areas, and \$8.50 per hour in lower-wage, rural areas.

Progressive Maryland led a broad coalition of labor, faith, and civil rights groups in lobbying lawmakers for the reform. Over the past nine years, Progressive Maryland successfully led grassroots campaigns to pass local living wage ordinances in the state's two biggest jurisdictions, Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, to generate momentum for a statewide law. Progressive Maryland drafted and lobbied the statewide bill through the General Assembly three years ago, but it was vetoed by then-Gov. Bob Ehrlich.

"This law lifts tens of thousands of families out of work and into the middle class," said Del. Tom Hucker, co-lead sponsor of the bill. "Today Maryland shows the rest of the country a good way to honor work and fight poverty."

"We should not use tax dollars to create poverty jobs," said Del. Herman Taylor, the other co-lead sponsor of the bill. "With enactment of this bill, Maryland state government is getting out of the poverty business."

"Progressive Maryland fought hard for this bill over many years, so it feels great to finally win," said Sean Dobson, Progressive Maryland's Acting Director. "It's gratifying to see that lawmakers ended up listening to the thousands of constituents who voiced support for this bill."

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