“Justice And A Living Wage”

By Rev. Dr. Corey Walker

Virginia is a state of contrasts. Birthplace of presidents and capital of the Confederacy, heel state for world-class football. Yet it is one of the poorest states for workers.

The recent installation of Kehinde Wiley’s “Rumors of War” monument at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts marked a major step in Virginia’s attempt to reconcile its past.

The current “Raise the Wage” campaign marks an important step for Virginia to reconcile its standing for workers. The “Raise the Wage” campaign is a coalition of citizens, civic organizations, and unions who support increasing the minimum wage to at least $15 per hour and removing many of the exemptions for businesses to pay the minimum wage.

The argument for a living wage is not one based on the top 1 percent who possess more wealth than the entire American middle class. Rather, it is about those at the bottom, the least among us – the young, women, people of color – who are among the lowest-paid of the over 82 million – 56.5 percent of all workers – hourly-paid U.S. workers.

The movement for a living wage is not just about economics and income. It is about justice itself. This is why faith leaders from across our nation – Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Muslims, and people of good will – support every effort to raise the minimum wage to establish living wages.

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