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WOMEN WORK!  
The National Network for Women's Employment

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Minimum Wage Increase Boosts Millions of Women's Wages**

**WASHINGTON, DC** — Today, millions of hardworking American women will get an well-deserved raise, as the first minimum wage increase in more than 10 years goes into effect. Long-time fair minimum wage advocate, Women Work! The National Network for Women's Employment, applauds Congress for the increase and looks forward to further efforts too improve the economic security of women workers, who are disproportionately represented among the nation's lowest earners.

"America's working women are taking a first step on the road toward greater economic security today," said Jill Miller, Women Work! President and CEO. "By increasing the minimum wage, Congress has also taken an important step, a step toward fairly compensating hardworking American working women, and their families."

In 2005, nearly two-thirds of minimum wage workers were women – despite the fact that women accounted for less than half of the U.S. labor force. The majority of American families rely on women's earnings to make up at least half of their family income.

"The minimum wage increase will have a powerful impact on the women served by Women Work!'s nationwide network of education and job training programs," said Miller. "When you're scrambling every month to make ends meet, even an extra few dollars a day is a significant contribution to a family budget."

Over the next two years, the minimum wage will increase, in increments, from \$5.15 to \$7.25 an hour, giving a family with one minimum wage earner an extra \$4,400 a year for basic needs like food, rent and child care. Today the first step in the increase takes place, raising the minimum wage to \$5.85 an hour. In July 2008, a further increase, to \$6.55 an hour, will occur. The final increase, to \$7.25 an hour, will take place in July 2009.

"This hard-won increase in the minimum wage is only a *first step* toward increasing economic security for women and families," warns Miller. "Now, our nation's leaders must pass policies that promote women's entry, re-entry and advancement into jobs with family-supporting wages, good benefits, job stability, prospects for advancements and opportunities to balance work and family."

**Women Work! The National Network for Women's Employment** is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that advances economic justice and equality for women through education, advocacy and organizing. Since 1978, the Network has assisted more than 10 million women to successfully enter, re-enter and advance in the workforce. Through supporting, advocating and increasing women's economic self-sufficiency, Women Work! members strengthen families and communities.

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