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## PRESS RELEASE

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Miami Beach Mayor Philip Levine: It's time to raise wages!**

— *Levine Files Legislation to Establish a Minimum Living Wage in Miami Beach* —

**Miami Beach, Fla.** – Miami Beach Mayor Philip Levine, joined by area businesses and community leaders today, announced legislation he will introduce at the May 11 City Commission meeting to establish a city minimum living wage. If adopted by the City Commission, Miami Beach will be the first city in Florida to set a citywide minimum wage.

“Miami Beach is known worldwide for taking on its challenges with meaningful solutions,” said Miami Beach Mayor Philip Levine. “Today, we are announcing proposed legislation that addresses the growing gap between wages and the cost of living in South Florida by proposing a minimum living wage for our community. We continue to hear stories from our residents who are unable to live and work in Miami Beach because of the high costs of rent, transportation and basic living costs. But today, we start addressing this growing problem through higher wages by establishing a citywide minimum living wage.”

Recent studies have found that the gap between Miami’s median income of just under \$31,000 and the \$77,000 cost to “live comfortably” with things like rent, food, and healthcare is the biggest spread in the country. Miami Beach is even more expensive, presenting a greater need for a fair minimum wage.

Jonathan Plutzik, business owner of The Betsy Hotel added, “Our business is proud to stand with Mayor Levine as he works with his colleagues on the City Commission to pass fiscally and socially responsible legislation that makes Miami Beach a leader in addressing minimum wages.”

Antoinette Quintyne, a worker at a Miami Beach nursing home said, “It’s getting more expensive every year to live in South Florida yet our wages continue to remain stagnant. I commend Mayor Levine for showing compassion by proposing legislation that ensures that residents like me are able to better afford the basic cost of living in Miami Beach.”

In 2004, more than 70% of Floridians voted to enshrine in our state constitution the power of municipalities to provide for a higher minimum wage than the state that more accurately reflects the higher cost of living in some parts of our very diverse state.

“We applaud Mayor Levine for showing real leadership on an issue that for so many means the difference between buying food or paying rent,” said Monica Russo, president of the SEIU Florida State Council. “Florida continues to see growing costs without higher wages and this disparity poses a real threat to Florida’s economy. It’s time to show that communities in Florida are ready to lead on this issue and we are proud to stand with Mayor Levine as Miami Beach paves the way.”

Mayor Levine added, "Miami Beach must lead the way in reversing the trend that makes Florida a high cost, low wage state. Cities all over the United States have passed similar local minimum wage ordinances and the evidence shows the positive impact it has on the local economy. Communities that established higher minimum wages have not seen increased unemployment and workers are better able to afford basic needs and employee turnover drops considerably."

The proposed legislation by Mayor Philip Levine would gradually raise, over a period of four years, the minimum living wage for all workers employed in the City and covered by the federal minimum wage. The minimum wage is currently \$8.05 per hour, as mandated by the State of Florida's Minimum Wage Act. The Ordinance would raise this rate to \$13.31 per hour by 2020, the rate currently mandated for employees of City contractors pursuant to the City's Living Wage Ordinance as codified in Miami Beach City Code §2-408. The City's minimum living wage would be set at \$10.31 per hour beginning in 2017, with one dollar an hour increases every year until the rate of \$13.31 is reached on June 30, 2020. Thereafter, the City Commission could annually, at its discretion, consider whether an increase in an amount equal to the Consumer Price Index for the year should be required.

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