

The Milwaukee Area Service & Hospitality Workers Organization: To host To host Gubernatorial Candidate Forum focused on raising wages

Posted on Friday, Mar 16, 2018

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March 15, 2018 – The Milwaukee Area Service & Hospitality Workers Organization (MASH) announced today a Gubernatorial candidate forum taking place on March 29th. The forum will focus on candidates' plans to raise wages and build worker power. The forum is co-sponsored by Citizen Action of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Working Families Party, and Our Wisconsin Revolution as part of the Wisconsin's Choice project.

“Working Wisconsin faces stagnant to declining household income and living standards because two-thirds of jobs in our state pay less than \$20 per hour,” said MASH Executive Director Peter Rickman. “We need a Governor with a real plan to raise wages by lifting the floor and strengthening the bargaining power of workers to set standards across industries and labor markets.”

Candidates largely agree on raising the minimum wage on a path to \$15 per hour. Voters, activists and pundits alike have noted, however, that in a crowded field no candidate has differentiated themselves on issues, including the fundamental challenge of addressing household income and living standards through higher wages resulting from stronger wage floors and labor market bargaining power of workers.

All declared candidates in the Democratic primary field have been invited. Candidates participating in the forum to discuss their plans to raise wages and build worker bargaining power include: Matt Flynn, Andy Gronik, Bob Harlow, Mike McCabe, Mahlon Mitchell, Kelda Roys, Paul Soglin, and Dana Wachs. Candidates Michelle Doolan, Tony Evers, Jeff Rumbaugh, Kathleen Vinehout, and Ramona Whitaker have chosen not to participate in the forum.

Participating candidates have been required confirm their attendance by March 15th and to submit in advance of the forum their detailed plans for raising wages and building worker power. At the forum, candidates will answer for a crowd of low-wage workers a set of questions about their specific plans and how they will implement them.

MASH is an organization of service and hospitality workers seeking to transform employment in their industries. MASH is a hub for workers to access good jobs with careers and a hub for employers who want a quality workforce. MASH launched to implement the landmark community benefits agreement for the new Bucks arena district in Milwaukee, and to expand its coverage of employment standards and workforce development.

Information on the forum can be found at <https://mashworkers.org/candidate-forum>