



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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CONTACT: Sharon Kayne  
Communications Director, New Mexico Voices for Children  
505-244-9505 ext. 30 (p), 505-401-8709 (c), [skayne@nmvoices.org](mailto:skayne@nmvoices.org)

### **Albuquerque City Council Passes Minimum Wage Ordinance**

ALBUQUERQUE, NM—Under the threat that the New Mexicans for a Fair Wage coalition would get a minimum wage initiative on the November ballot, the Albuquerque City Council passed its own minimum wage ordinance on Thursday, April 20, 2006. Passed on a 6-3 vote – and with assurance from the mayor that he would sign it into law – the ordinance will raise the minimum wage to \$6.75 in January 2007, to \$7.15 in 2008, and to \$7.50 in 2009. Employers who provide at least \$2,500 in either health-care insurance or child-care reimbursement, can pay one dollar less per hour. An attempt to exempt young workers from the higher wage failed. Five Democrats and one Republican voted in favor of the ordinance. Three Republicans voted against.

The vote took place after several hours of public testimony, the vast majority of which was in favor of the increase. The city ordinance followed an attempt at a statewide increase by the New Mexico Legislature this past February. While a minimum wage bill passed the House, time ran out before the Senate could vote on a compromise bill. Bernalillo County commissioners have said they would follow the city's example and install a similar minimum wage for the unincorporated parts of Albuquerque that lie within the county limits.

New Mexicans for a Fair wage will now turn its attention to other municipalities around the state. The only other city in New Mexico with a minimum wage set higher than the federal level of \$5.15 an hour is Santa Fe. As economist and NM Voices for Children research director Gerry Bradley pointed out in his testimony before the Albuquerque City Council, Santa Fe has seen its economy grow and its unemployment levels drop since its minimum wage was raised.

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New Mexico Voices for Children is a nonprofit organization advocating for policies to improve the health and well-being of New Mexico's children, families and communities.  
2340 Alamo SE, Suite 120, Albuquerque, NM 97106; 505-244-9505; [www.nmvoices.org](http://www.nmvoices.org)