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A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHILD ADVOCATES

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JCRAR Introduction Harsh Reality for WI Families *The Politics of Minimum Wage Disappointing for Many*

Madison- The Wisconsin Council of Children and Families, a statewide member-based organization, expressed disappointment in the introduction of Senate Bill 12 and Assembly Bill 12, authored by the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules, to legislatively prohibit the increase in the State of Wisconsin minimum wage.

“While we have known for some time this would happen, the introduction of the bill solidifies the reality for Wisconsin’s low-income families that they won’t see an increase in the minimum wage any time soon,” Charity Eleson, Executive Director of WCCF said. “If this legislation passes, 150,000 workers in Wisconsin won’t see what would have been the first increase in the minimum wages since 1997.”

The Governor’s Council on the Minimum Wage recommended an increase in the minimum wage to \$5.70 in 2004 and \$6.50 in 2005. Those increases were forwarded by the Department of Workforce Development as an administrative rule. The Joint Committee for Administrative Rules objected to the increase on September 23, 2004.

A minimum wage worker in Wisconsin working full time, year round at \$5.15 per hour makes \$10,712 annually, which is 32 percent below the poverty rate for a family of three.

“The political delay in increasing the minimum wage is disappointing for Wisconsin’s working families. Our low-income working taxpayers desperately need this raise,” Eleson said. “A minimum wage increase would have improved the economic security of low-income families and their children. For children’s sake, we hope this political challenge is resolved and all of Wisconsin can walk away a winner.”

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