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Contact: Annika Yates; (312) 870-4960; ayates@heartlandalliance.org

**RAISE ILLINOIS'S COALITION ISSUES STATEMENT AS THE ILLINOIS STATE SENATE
CONVENES A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON LONG OVERDUE MINIMUM WAGE
INCREASE**

Statewide Coalition Urges State Lawmakers to Vote on a Minimum Wage Bill

(June 23, 2015, Springfield) – Raise Illinois, a statewide coalition working to increase the state's minimum wage, issued the following statement today as members of the Illinois State Senate gather in Springfield for a Committee of the Whole on Minimum Wage.

“We applaud the Senate for taking up this issue and talking about the importance of increasing the state minimum wage, and strongly urge the General Assembly to take action today to pass a minimum wage bill.

The last time minimum wage workers saw a raise in Illinois was nearly 5 years ago. Over the past 5 years the cost of everything from food to housing has risen, making it increasingly difficult for workers and their families to survive on their meager paychecks. The current minimum wage of \$8.25 an hour is unlivable. If the minimum wage had kept pace with inflation it would be nearly \$11 today. It is time to raise the wage!

Many workers support their families on poverty wages; 110,000 Illinoisans work full time and still live in poverty, earning less than \$18,552 per year for a family of three. Nobody who works full-time should have to live in poverty.

The Raise Illinois coalition is calling for state lawmakers to take swift action and support raising the state's minimum wage to bolster the state economy and give an immediate boost to low-income workers and their families. It is, without a doubt, the most immediate and substantial investment Illinois can make in the lives of working people that will strengthen families, communities and our state's economy.”

Raise Illinois is led by a coalition made up of community, business, faith, and labor organizations along with minimum wage workers and supporters that are committed to fighting for a raise in the minimum wage in Illinois. Raise Illinois is a major legislative and grassroots campaign to increase Illinois' minimum wage from the current \$8.25 per hour to \$11 an hour.

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