

## Fresno workers rally to raise minimum wage to \$15

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Fresno workers held a rally at Manchester Center on Wednesday as part of the Fight for \$15 national campaign to seek higher pay. BONHIA LEE — THE FRESNO BEE

Fresno workers participated for the first time Wednesday in the [Fight for \\$15](#), a 2 1/2-year-old national campaign to raise wages for what organizers said were underpaid employees.

More than 150 people marched peacefully from [Manchester Center](#) in central Fresno across the street to a McDonald's restaurant while a union organizer shouted, "What do we want?" and workers answered "\$15."

The Fresno rally was one of hundreds organized by unions nationwide on Tax Day to bring attention to the low wages entry-level workers are paid and to demand a raise in the minimum wage to \$15.

The federal minimum wage is \$7.24 an hour and the state minimum, which is expected to increase by \$1 next year, is \$9.

The group — made up of home and child care workers, county and state workers, students, and community leaders — waved signs and chanted in front of McDonald's, then walked through the fast-food restaurant and back to the shopping center.

"Hold the burgers, hold the fries. Make our wages super-sized," the workers chanted.

The protest comes two weeks after McDonald's announced it would increase salaries for a fraction of its employees by \$1. While state and national protests included fast-food workers, Fresno's event did not have any.

But union members with the [Service Employees International](#) marched in unity for all, they said.

"We're here to stand up. We're here to join forces and we are here to demand better," said Beau Reynolds with SEIU Local 100. "To demand better wages, to demand better benefits and to demand the right and respect that all working families deserve."

Home care worker Vicky Vang said she was paid about \$9 an hour 15 years ago when she started caring for her mother. Now, she makes \$10.25 an hour, but it's not enough, she said.

"I want more than that," Vang said. "It's not fair. The wages are too low. We work hard and we don't have enough money to feed our families."

After the Fresno event, the workers boarded three buses headed to a state rally at the University of California, Berkeley.

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