Earnings for low- and midwage workers have generally declined or stagnated for decades. In 2016, earnings for the lowest-paid workers surpassed their 1979 level for the first time in 37 years.

This pay bump is largely due to the rising state minimum wage. California increased the minimum wage from $8 to $10 per hour between 2014 and 2016.

Policy choices can help can ensure that all workers along the income spectrum are better able to achieve economic security. Beginning January 1, 2018, the state’s minimum wage increased to $11 per hour and will rise annually until reaching $15 per hour, boosting hourly pay for low-wage workers. At the same time, additional policies are needed to promote economic security for low- and midwage workers.