

S.J. Mercury News
Sept 2, '12

Internal Affairs

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Labor has faith in minimum wage drive

In the drive to increase the minimum wage in San Jose from \$8 to \$10 per hour, organized labor has worked deftly with surrogates and allies.

In the beginning, students at San Jose State University helped circulate the measure to get it on the ballot. Now labor has turned to old friends in an effort to pass Measure D — churches and synagogues.

Labor is sponsoring the annual Labor in the Pulpits program at 165 houses of worship on Labor Day weekend. The message is clearly in favor of Measure D. "We can use our vote to cultivate the ability of all to participate meaningfully in economic and social life," said a bulletin announcement sent out by the San Jose Diocese.

Among those signing a statement defending Measure D are Rabbi Dana Magat of Temple Emanu-El, the Rev. John Freese-man of Holy Redeemer Lutheran Church and Catholic priest Eduardo A. Samaniego. And no, that's not a rabbi, minister and priest joke.

"It shows the moral issue at stake here,"

said union attorney **Christopher Platten**. "We live in one of the most expensive places in the world. The income disparity is frightening and, in my mind, immoral."

We might as well welcome the clergymen to politics, San Jose-style. The anti-Measure D folks, led by pro-business forces who have no clergy signing their statements, filed a suit last week challenging the language of the statement signed by the clerics. The business leaders question the idea that Measure D won't cost the city money. In turn, the union side has questioned an argument from the anti-Measure D folks, saying it is all too predictive about the proposal's impact.

Think of it as a legal and ecumenical food fight. A resolution on the arguments is expected in Santa Clara County Superior Court this week.

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