Employee Representation in the New World of Work  
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Since 1994, over 150 cities, counties and universities across the U.S. have passed living wage ordinances. These ordinances mandate that certain employers pay workers an hourly wage high enough to at least meet the federal poverty line.  
The ordinances were promoted by local coalitions of unions, community groups, and other actors, such as religious organizations. In most cases, the coalitions engaged in one or two year campaigns to convince the City Council to adopt the legislation.  
This paper will discuss the history of the modern living wage movement in the U.S., reviewing the actors involved, the dynamics of the campaigns, and the outcomes. This includes an examination of the economic impact of the ordinances on workers, firms and city governments and an overview of what we’ve learned about the implementation of the laws. The paper will also discuss more qualitative assessments of the impacts on organizing: did the campaigns build new organizations or coalitions? Did the campaigns lead to new union organizing? What is the relationship between unions and non-union workers and organizations in these campaigns?  
Finally, I will discuss the current status of the movement for living wages. Currently, the movement is much less active than it was ten years ago. Why did the movement slow down? What are living wage advocates currently working on? What are the prospects for future organizing around low-wage work and worker organizing?  
The paper will attempt to summarize key findings from previous research. This body of work covers my work over the past 15 years which includes:  
* in-depth interviews with living wage activists, including union leaders, community activists, and national living wage resource people  
* interviews with city staff in charge of implementing the ordinances  
* analysis of living wage ordinances from over 80 cities  
* analysis of survey data with workers and employers covered by the laws in three cities