



WNET Contact:
Donna Williams
212-560-8030; Williamsd@wnet.org

Press materials: <http://www.thirteen.org/13pressroom/>

**Tavis Smiley Reports on
the Impact of Raising the Minimum Wage
On *Getting Ahead*
Friday, October 7 at 9 p.m. on PBS**

Documentary is the latest offering in WNET's "Chasing the Dream: Poverty and Opportunity in America" initiative

This election year, one of the hot button issues is the minimum wage. The "Fight for Fifteen," as it is called, began in New York City on November 29, 2012, when over 100 hundred fast food workers walked off their jobs, going out on strike, for a \$15 hourly wage and union rights. Since then, the "Fight for Fifteen" has become a national initiative, a plank in the Democratic Party Platform, and an issue Republicans would like to see handled on the state and local level. Only a handful of cities have already put in place significant wage increases.

This fall, ***Getting Ahead***, a one-hour documentary from Tavis Smiley and WNET, airing **Friday, October 7 at 9 p.m. on PBS** (check local listings), reports on the real consequences of the "Fight for Fifteen" for both wage earners and small business owners in California, the first state to raise the minimum wage. The documentary takes a discerning look at how increasing the minimum wage is playing out in four Northern California cities – San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley and

Emeryville – where pay increases have been in place for at least two years, pre-dating the 2016 statewide mandated minimum wage increases.

To understand what it means for workers trying to make a livable wage and for business owners trying to make payroll, ***Getting Ahead*** weaves real-life stories with observations by two economic experts – Ken Jacobs, chair of the UC Berkeley Labor Center and Christopher Thornberg, PhD, founder of Beacon Economics – who look at the same set of circumstances but come to very different conclusions.

Tavis Smiley meets small business owners like Danny Huang, in Oakland’s Chinatown, who is concerned that he cannot raise his prices enough to keep pace with paying mandated increases in wages. He profiles low-wage earners like Maria Martinez and Jamie Gaucin, trying to raise three children on minimum wage jobs, but who are forced to seek public assistance to make ends meet. ***Getting Ahead*** demonstrates that there’s no single answer in the debate over the minimum wage.

As ***Getting Ahead*** reveals, there are differences of opinion about how raising the minimum wage will impact local businesses and employees. “What we also heard from those we talked with,” says Smiley in the documentary, “is that if there is a way for those in poverty to chase the dream in today’s rapidly changing economy, it won’t come from raising the minimum wage alone. The answer, anti-poverty advocates stress, is that we also need more affordable housing and job training for this new kind of economy.”

Getting Ahead is the seventh collaboration between Tavis Smiley and writer-director, Jacoba Atlas. Previous PBS documentaries include *Too Important to Fail*, *Education Under Arrest*, and *A Call to Conscience* which deconstructed Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s pivotal anti-Vietnam War speech.

Getting Ahead is a TS Media, Inc. production for THIRTEEN Productions LLC in association with WNET. Producers: Sasheen Artis and Kimberly Logan. Managing Editor: Tavis Smiley. Executive Producer/Writer/Director: Jacoba Atlas. For THIRTEEN, Executive-in-Charge: Stephen Segaller. Executive Producer: Nina Chaudry. Senior Programming Consultant: Ed Hersh. Supervising Producer: Stephanie Carter. Associate Producer: Benjamin Phelps. Major funding for ***Getting Ahead*** is provided by The JPB Foundation. Additional funding is provided by the Ford Foundation.

Getting Ahead is one of two specials airing as part *Chasing the Dream: Poverty and Opportunity in America*, a coordinated, multi-platform public media initiative from WNET that provides breadth, depth, and context and a deeper understanding of both the causes of poverty and the creation of jobs and opportunities at all levels and institutions of our society. Since the beginning of 2015, it has produced close to 100 reports and segments across all platforms of public media – national documentaries on PBS, news reports on the *PBS NewsHour* and *PBS NewsHour Weekend*, dozens of segments on THIRTEEN’s daily public affairs and issues program, *MetroFocus*, *Long*

Island Business Report and *NJTV News*, as well as digital and online reports, partnerships with public radio, and companion pieces on PBS member stations across the country.

Dream On, hosted by political comedian John Fugelsang, retraces the journey of Alexis de Tocqueville to learn what has become of the American dream, follows ***Getting Ahead*** later in the evening at 10 p.m. ET on PBS (check local listings).

###

About WNET

WNET is America's flagship PBS station and parent company of [THIRTEEN](#) and [WLIW21](#). WNET also operates [NJTV](#), the statewide public media network in New Jersey. Through its broadcast channels, three cable services (KidsThirteen, Create and World) and online streaming sites, WNET brings quality arts, education and public affairs programming to more than five million viewers each week. WNET produces and presents such acclaimed PBS series as [Nature](#), [Great Performances](#), [American Masters](#), [PBS NewsHour Weekend](#), [Charlie Rose](#) and a range of documentaries, children's programs, and local news and cultural offerings. WNET's groundbreaking series for children and young adults include [Get the Math](#), [Oh Noah!](#) and [Cyberchase](#) as well as [Mission US](#), the award-winning interactive history game. WNET highlights the tri-state's unique culture and diverse communities through [NYC-ARTS](#), [Reel 13](#), [NJTV News with Mary Alice Williams](#) and [MetroFocus](#), the daily multi-platform news magazine focusing on the New York region. In addition, WNET produces online-only programming including the award-winning series about gender identity, [First Person](#), and an intergenerational look at tech and pop culture, [The Chatterbox with Kevin and Grandma Lill](#). In 2015, THIRTEEN launched Passport, an online streaming service which allows members to see new and archival THIRTEEN and PBS programming anytime, anywhere: www.thirteen.org/passport.