

# The VOTE Textbook

## Student Notes

### Chapter 11: Livelihood

#### Discussion Story: Poverty in a sixth-grade class

Livelihood is the means through which people earn money to pay for the necessities of life—shelter, food, clothing, health care, electricity, heat, and more.

#### The Golden Moment

Shared Problem: Poverty causes suffering and deprivation

Shared Goal: An end to poverty

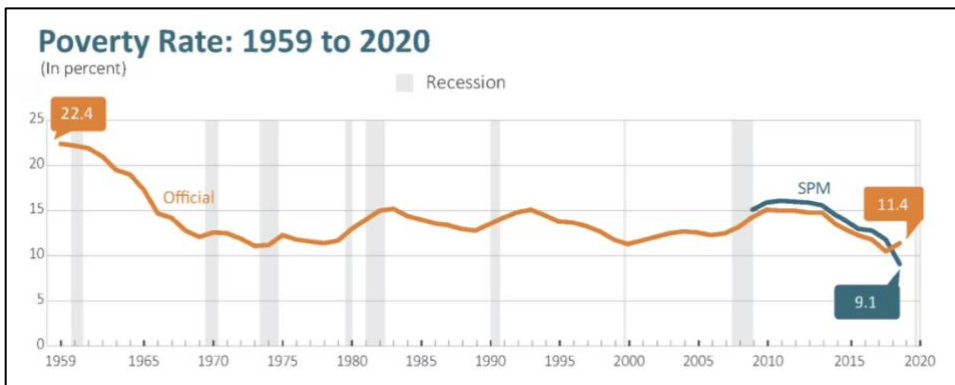
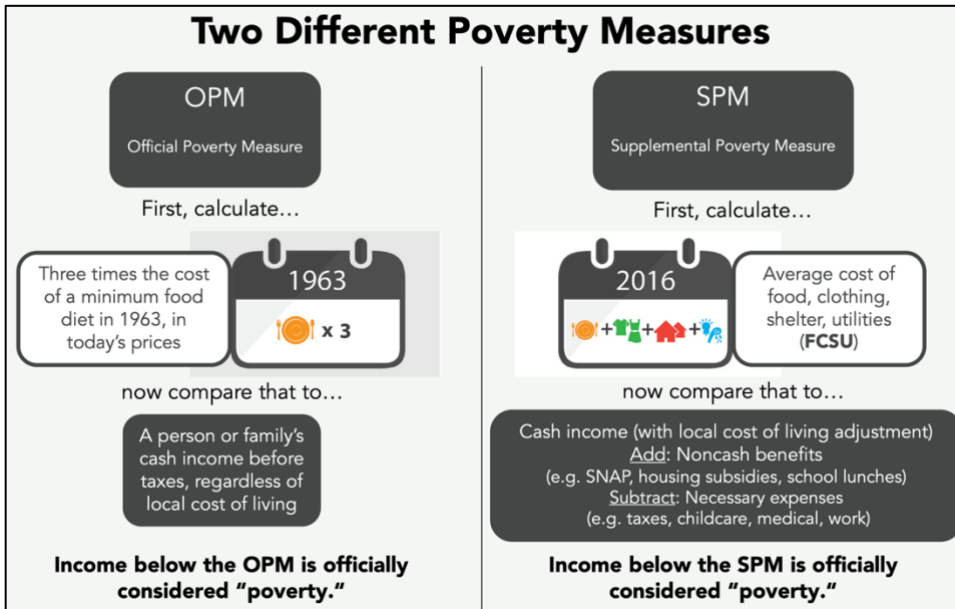
#### Understanding the Issue of Livelihood

Poverty is having an insufficient livelihood to afford the things needed to survive.



The Official Poverty Measure (OPM) determines the income level officially considered to be “poverty.”

When people’s income before taxes falls below the poverty threshold, they may qualify for both government assistance and privately funded assistance. The Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) is calculated differently, and as of 2022 was not used to determine people’s eligibility for assistance.



In 2017, forty percent of Americans couldn’t cover an emergency expense of \$400.

### Labor Unions versus Right to Work Movement

**Labor Unions:** There are organized associations of workers for the purpose of collective negotiation. Workers pay dues to the organization.

**Right to Work Movement:** People in this movement are against mandatory membership in unions.

Two notable government initiatives to combat poverty during the 20<sup>th</sup> century:

1. 1930s: FDR’s “New Deal” included minimum wage legislation
2. 1960s: Johnson’s War on Poverty

Johnson’s War on Poverty programs continue today:

- AmeriCorps VISTA
- Federal TRIO Programs
- Head Start for School Readiness
- Job Corps
- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

FDR’s minimum wage legislation continue today.

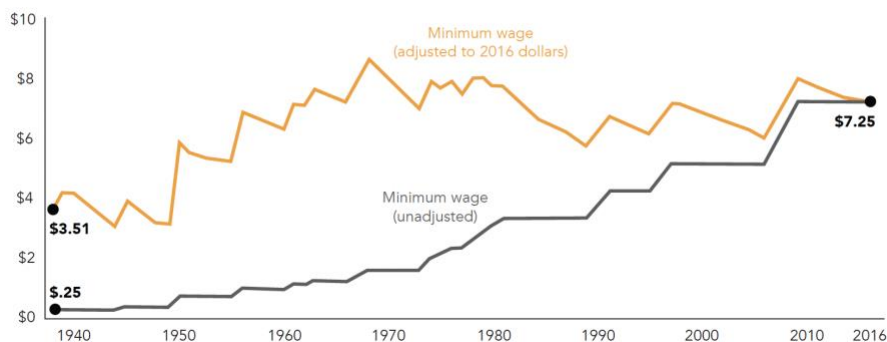
- Established in 1938 as part of the Federal Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

### Minimum Wage Legislation

The federal minimum wage requires an act of Congress and the president’s signature to be changed. States, counties, and municipalities can and often do set their own minimum wage rates.

Money Illusion: Think about what a dollar can buy (the real value), not just the face value (the nominal value) of the dollar. When prices go up, I can buy less and less with each dollar and my purchasing power falls.

Federal Minimum Wage (Nominal and Real), 1938–2016



## Voices on Livelihood

### Radical

Response to discussion story: Poverty is baked into the system of capitalism because there are only two choices anyone gets with private ownership: exploit or be exploited.

Voice: Pages 329-332

Summary: Page 333

Talking Points: Page 334

### Conservative

Response to discussion story: Government handouts and artificially inflated wages create a perfect storm of disincentives that keep people trapped in poverty.

Voice: Pages 335-338

Summary: Page 339

Talking Points: Page 340

### Liberal

Response to discussion story: It's wrong that some people work day and night but stay stuck in poverty. With the help of government, everyone has a chance to succeed.

Voice: Pages 341-344

Summary: Page 345

Talking Points: Page 346

Shared Outcome: An end to poverty.

Activity: Skit, "All the World's a Stage," Page 348