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# LETTERS

## Visible Hands

Marilynne Robinson's essay ["Is Poverty Necessary?" June] describes the quest for understanding that drove her to study the great political economists, culminating in her discovery of the contributions made by Henry George. I followed a similar path years ago, and I have attempted to inspire others to do the same through my own teaching and writing.

"It would require less than the fingers of the two hands to enumerate those who from Plato down rank with him," the philosopher John Dewey said of Henry George. Yet today George's theories are ignored, and his remarkable body of work has been marginalized in academic economics, a discipline that was corrupted by special-interest funding while still in its infancy. I recommend serious engagement with George's work to all who read Robinson's article and want to learn more.

Edward Dodson  
Cherry Hill, N.J.

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"Is poverty necessary?" Marilynne Robinson asks us in her insightful essay. The answer, of course, is no. But capitalism, left to its own devices, makes poverty a certainty. Companies will always minimize the cost of inputs necessary for the production of goods and services, labor chief among them. In order to keep inequality at a minimum, we must continually update the rules under which our economy operates. Without this sort of oversight, we would still have child labor and workplaces far more dangerous than those we have today.

We periodically write laws that forbid certain practices and that set restrictions on others. These laws are never generated in a vacuum; they come about in response to effective and concerted political pressure.

The Fight for \$15 campaign is a great example of a social movement attempting to apply precisely this sort of pressure. The movement is gaining momentum across the country, and I am hopeful that before too long we'll see a \$15 nationwide minimum wage enshrined into law. As Robinson's essay reminds us, the needs of low-wage workers are just as important as those of other Americans.

John Crea  
St. Paul, Minn.