

Better Pay for Honest Work

Raise Georgia's Minimum Wage to Expand Middle Class, Strengthen Economy

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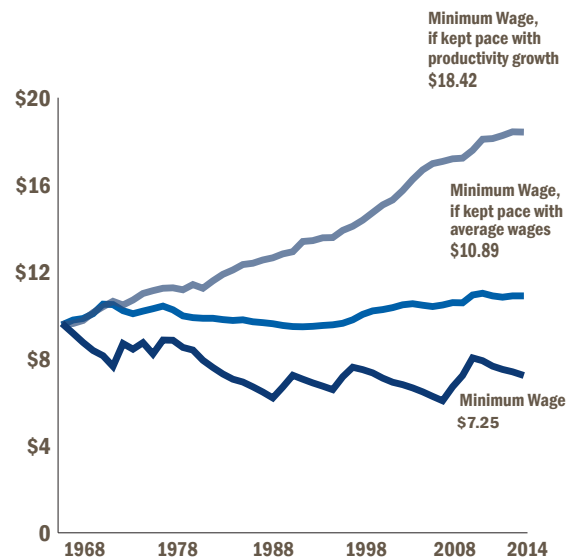
Georgia's economy is increasingly tilted toward the types of jobs that don't pay workers enough to make ends meet or keep their families out of poverty. They are food servers at local restaurants. Retail clerks selling products they can't afford. Home health aides helping the frail and disabled live with dignity. More Georgians are working in these types of jobs than ever, and the state's economy is leaving them behind. Wages are flat, workers put in extra hours at lower-quality jobs, while inequality skyrockets. Georgia businesses and the economy struggle as a result, as working families spend and invest less.

Raising the minimum wage is a proven way states can put their workers and economies on sounder footing. Boosting paychecks for those in low-wage jobs puts upward pressure on wages for all workers, lifting more Georgians into the middle class and helping them stay there. A higher minimum wage would also pump more than a billion dollars in wages into the state's economy, spreading prosperity more broadly and giving local businesses a larger pool of paying customers.

This brief analyzes custom data from the nonpartisan, Washington D.C.-based Economic Policy Institute (EPI) to estimate what happens if Georgia phases in a minimum wage increase to \$10.10 per hour from 2016 to 2018. The analysis shows the increase would:

- **Give a raise to nearly one million Georgia workers.** An estimated 910,000 Georgia workers, or nearly 23 percent of the state's workforce, would earn larger paychecks as a result of the change. About one in four women and one in five men in Georgia would get a raise.
- **Bolster parents and children.** More than a quarter, or 28 percent, of all workers who would profit from the higher minimum wage are parents. Nearly a third of those parents are sole breadwinners. And about one in five Georgia children lives in a household that would benefit from the higher minimum wage.
- **Help older, educated and full-time workers, not just part-time teenagers as detractors suggest.** An estimated 92 percent of Georgia workers who would benefit from a \$10.10 minimum wage are over the age of 20 and close to half completed at least some college education. About 62 percent work at least 35 hours per week, and another 29 percent work between 20 and 35 hours per week.
- **Build a stronger and more equitable foundation for the state's economy.** Raising Georgia's wage floor over three years puts about \$1.3 billion in new wages into the hands of workers. Their subsequent spending boosts Georgia's overall economy as measured by Gross Domestic Product by an estimated \$812 million and creates about 2,900 jobs over three years. Higher wages could also help many Georgia companies strengthen their bottom lines over time by reducing turnover and boosting productivity.

Minimum Wage Not Keeping Up

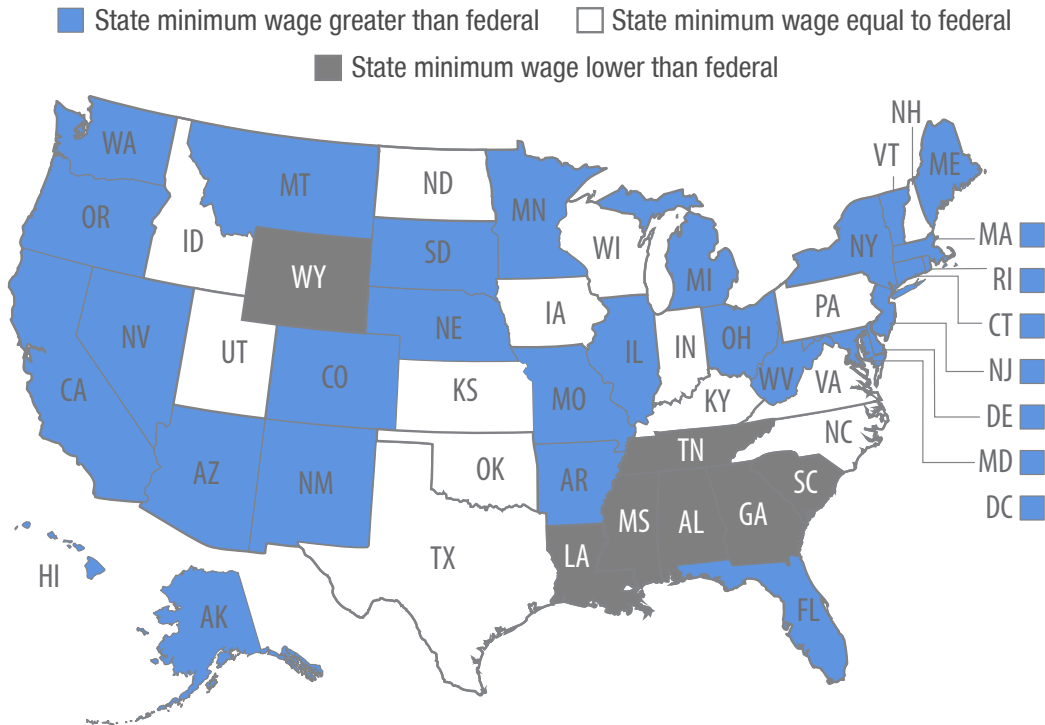


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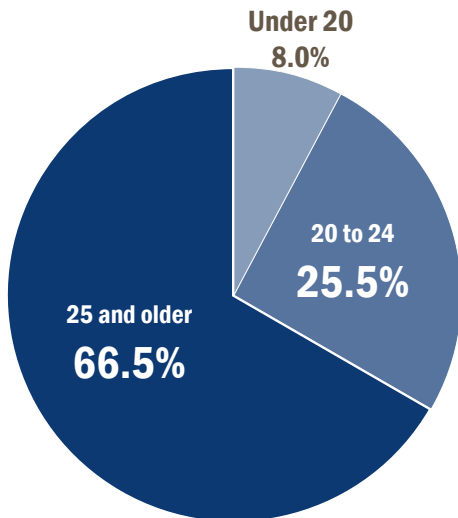
In a recent poll, 66 percent of Georgia voters agreed with the statement “Someone who works full-time should be paid enough to keep them out of poverty.” But achieving that goal remains elusive for too many Georgians. Raising the minimum wage is a way for Georgia to help more workers reach the middle class, spread prosperity to more families and strengthen the economy’s foundation for the future.

A job isn’t a sure path to economic security. Thousands of Georgians work hard every day and take home a weekly paycheck but cannot even afford basic necessities. A higher minimum wage would help these families save for the future and work into the middle class.

Momentum Growing Toward Higher Wages in State



Adults Over 25 Benefit Most from Higher Minimum Wage



Many States Raised Minimum Wage, Enjoyed Job Growth

