Give Wisconsin a Raise

Increasing the Minimum Wage to $15
Would Increase Pay for a Broad Range of Workers

February 2021

Wisconsin’s Minimum Wage is Falling Behind Other States’

- In contrast to Wisconsin, most states have minimum wages that exceed the federal minimum: 29 states have minimums that exceed the federal minimum wage of $7.25 an hour, including states with Republican-dominated state government, such as Arizona, Nebraska, and Missouri, and Wisconsin’s neighboring states of Minnesota and Illinois.
- An additional 46 counties and cities across the country have set their own minimum wage laws, a course of action that lawmakers have prohibited in Wisconsin.
- About 40% of workers live in states that have approved raising their minimum wages to $15.

A diverse group of workers would benefit from raising Wisconsin’s minimum wage

- Increasing the minimum wage to $15 would raise the pay of 843,000 workers in Wisconsin, or nearly 1 out of every 3 workers (30%).
- Full-time workers who get a raise would earn an additional $3,500 a year, making it more likely a worker could afford a reliable car to get to work, or cover child care expenses.
- Most workers – nearly 6 out of 10 – who would get a raise are age 25 or older. Sixty-one percent of the workers who would get a raise are women.
- A higher minimum wage helps reduce the racial wage gap by lifting the wages of Black and Brown workers disproportionately employed in our lowest paying jobs.

Raising the wage would have wide-ranging positive effects on Wisconsin communities

- Wisconsin’s minimum wage was last increased twelve years ago. Since then, it has lost about one-fifth of its purchasing power from inflation.
- The increase in the minimum wage would generate $2.9 billion million more in wages for low-paid workers, who would spend their additional resources at local businesses, buying basic necessities for themselves and their families.
- An enormous body of research examining the real-world effects of minimum wage hikes finds that raising the minimum has strong positive impact on workers’ earnings and little, if any, negative impact on job growth.
- Increasing the minimum wage can improve productivity and cut down on employee turnover costs.

Source: Economic Policy Institute