



Maryland Fight For \$15: A Fair Minimum Wage For All (HB166/SB280)

Raising the minimum wage is good for workers, businesses and the economy.

Many Maryland residents work full-time yet struggle to get by financially — they work hard but can't afford basic needs for themselves or their families.

Maryland's current minimum wage of \$10.10 an hour, or \$21,000 a year for a full-time worker, is far too low for workers to make ends meet. While many families have been treading water financially, the cost of necessities like housing, child care and health care continue to rise. In fact, there is nowhere in Maryland where a single full-time working adult can meet their basic needs making less than \$15 per hour. While \$15 per hour still doesn't constitute a living wage, this is a meaningful step toward establishing economic security for workers in Maryland.

Maryland must raise its minimum wage to boost the incomes of workers and address the growing concentration of poverty in our state. The General Assembly and Governor Hogan must pass the 2019 Fight for \$15 Bill to increase Maryland's minimum wage to \$15 per hour by 2023.

A \$15 wage will benefit workers, businesses and the economy:

- Increasing Maryland's minimum wage would make a significant difference to close to **600,000 workers** who would see greater economic security — they would not have to decide between paying rent, affording health care or putting food on the table.
- Paying fair wages **helps big and small businesses** attract and retain good employees, increase sales and revenues, and hire more people.
- A family-sustaining minimum wage **would strengthen the state's economy**. It will boost businesses through increased spending: Higher wages create economic activity as families spend more on food, clothing and other needs.

Who would the bill help?

- **Hard-working adults:** 90 percent of affected workers are at least 20 years old, and three out of five work full-time.
- **Children:** 273,000 children would benefit from higher family income, which would help children's educational outcomes, social development and health.
- **Women, people of color and veterans:** One in four Maryland working women, one in four Maryland workers of color, and 23,000 veterans would benefit from the bill.

Recent polling shows that Marylanders across the state support taking action:

A September 2018 Goucher poll found that 71 percent of Marylanders of both political parties support raising the minimum wage to \$15 dollars.

www.goucher.edu/hughes-center/documents/SEPT18_Goucher_Poll_Part_One.pdf



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The bill would:

- Gradually raise Maryland's minimum wage from the current \$10.10 per hour to \$15 by July 1, 2023 and automatically adjust it to keep up with the rising cost of living – as more than 16 states and the District of Columbia currently do.
- Preserve the current Maryland law that allows communities to raise the wage higher in the future.
- Include a raise for tipped workers whose wages are frozen at \$3.63 an hour. Tipped workers — who are most often women and workers of color — live in poverty and depend on food stamps at twice the rate of the general population.
- Include workers under age 20. Although this group makes up only 10 percent of those affected, they are disproportionately from low-income households and half are struggling to work their way through college facing spiraling debt.
- Expand the minimum wage law to cover agricultural workers who work on commission and address a historically racially-based exclusion of these workers from basic worker protections.
- Strengthen Maryland's outdated, often ineffective retaliation protection laws for workers exercising their minimum wage rights.
- Increase funding for community service providers, such as certain care workers, who rely largely on state funding for their wages, to accommodate the minimum wage increase.

[1] Economic Policy Institute 2017 Family Budget Calculator (forthcoming). <http://epi.org/resources/budget>



Take Action Today!

Maryland must pass a strong, clean bill — that includes all workers — to raise the minimum wage and help working families across the state who are struggling. **Call (410) 841-3000 and tell your state legislators and Governor Hogan to support the “Clean 15” bill** which ensures that Maryland workers are provided fair pay. For more information on the bill, the Fight for \$15 coalition and how you can help, please visit: ff15maryland.org.

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