

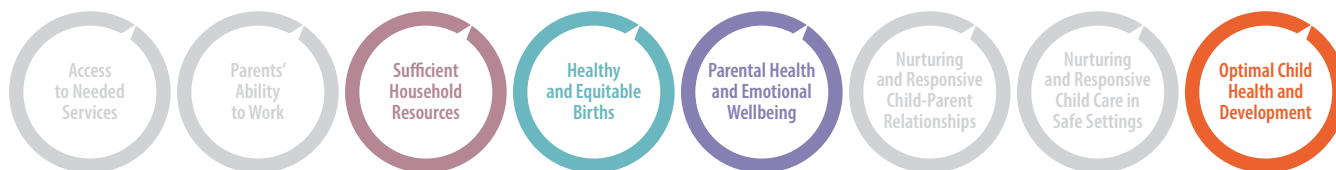


Excerpt from the 2020 Prenatal-to-3 State Policy Roadmap

## POLICY

# STATE MINIMUM WAGE

A state minimum wage of \$10 or greater is an effective state POLICY to impact:



### A state minimum wage of \$10 or greater:

- increases earnings and family incomes with minimal or no adverse effects on employment;
- reduces poverty rates among children, Black and Latinx individuals, and people with lower educational attainment;
- improves birth outcomes including reduced infant mortality and low birthweight; and
- keeps children safe (reduces child neglect rates).

# 19

states have  
adopted and fully  
implemented a  
minimum wage  
of \$10 or greater.

## WHAT IS A STATE MINIMUM WAGE?

The minimum wage establishes a floor for workers' hourly wages. The federal minimum wage requires that most hourly workers be paid at least \$7.25, but states can establish higher thresholds.<sup>1</sup> Currently 30 states have minimum wages higher than the federal level, with some states as high as \$15.<sup>2,3</sup> Nineteen states have minimum wages of \$10 or greater.<sup>4</sup>

## WHY IS A STATE MINIMUM WAGE IMPORTANT?

### A Full-Time Worker Paid the Current Federal Minimum Wage Lives in Poverty

With a \$7.25 hourly wage (the federal minimum) and a 40-hour work week, a full-time minimum wage worker working 52 weeks yearly earns just \$15,080 each year, which is below the poverty level for two-, three-, and four-person households.<sup>5</sup>

### Increasing the Minimum Wage Can Impact Millions of Families and Substantially Reduce Poverty

According to the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), if all states raised their minimum wages to \$15 by 2024, 40 million workers and 14.4 million of their children would benefit from higher household incomes.<sup>6</sup> The EPI estimated that 40% of single parents and 67% of workers currently living in poverty would see a raise, and the US Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated 1.3 million fewer people would be in poverty.<sup>7</sup> Increasing the state minimum wage saves on overall taxpayer costs by boosting earned income and reducing the amount of support lower-wage workers may need from public assistance programs. In particular, a \$1 increase in hourly wages for workers making below \$12.16 per hour can reduce the number of people using public assistance programs by 850,000.<sup>8</sup>

### Women and Workers of Color Make up a Disproportionate Share of Low-Income Workers

Women and workers of color are disproportionately represented among those who earn less than \$15 per hour, and wage disparities can contribute to income and wealth disparities.<sup>9</sup> White workers earn, on average, 25% more in annual income than Black workers,<sup>10</sup> and the median net wealth of White families is estimated at 10 times that of families of color.<sup>11</sup>

### Higher Family Incomes That Result from Minimum Wage Increases Yield Better Social and Health Outcomes for Parents and Children

Higher incomes can help families more easily access essential resources, such as housing, food, health, and transportation—in turn reducing stress, improving a child's caregiving environment, and reducing the likelihood that a child will experience abuse, neglect, or other adverse experiences at home.

## WHAT IMPACT DOES A STATE MINIMUM WAGE HAVE?

Increasing the minimum wage to \$10 or greater increases household resources and reduces child poverty, particularly in families of color. A minimum wage of \$10 or greater also improves birth outcomes and parent mental and physical health.



Search the new Prenatal-to-3 Policy Clearinghouse for an ongoing inventory of rigorous evidence reviews at [pn3policy.org/clearinghouse](https://pn3policy.org/clearinghouse).

# Strong Causal Studies Show That a State Minimum Wage of \$10 or Greater Impacts Four Prenatal-to-3 Policy Goals

## Examples of Impact:

### Sufficient Household Resources

- A 10% minimum wage increase reduced poverty by 5.9% for children under age 18 with parents with no college degree and 9.6% for children under age 6 (Y)
- A 10% minimum wage increase boosted annual earnings between 1.3% and 8.3%, depending on the study (A,K)
- Employment impacts associated with a 10 percent minimum wage increase were found to be statistically insignificant, ranging from a 0.3 percent decrease to a 1.1 percent increase (A)
- A 10 percent increase in the minimum wage boosted, by 4 percent, the likelihood that children of mothers with no college degree had a working parent, with the greatest effects for children ages 0 through 5 (an increase of 7 percent) (Y)

### Healthy and Equitable Births

- A 10% increase in the minimum wage reduced infant mortality by 3.2% (H)
- A \$1 increase in the minimum wage reduced births to adolescents by 2% (B)
- A \$1 minimum wage increase led to a 1% decrease in low birthweight (Q)

### Parental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

- A \$1 increase in the minimum wage resulted in a 3.4% to 5.9% reduction in adult (non-drug) suicides (T)
- A \$1 increase in the minimum wage led to a 7% decline in smoking during pregnancy (Q)

### Optimal Child Health and Development

- A \$1 increase in the minimum wage reduced child neglect reports by 10.8% for children ages 0 to 5 (L)
- A \$1 increase in the minimum wage from birth through age 5 increased by 8.7% the likelihood that a child was reported to be in excellent or very good health from ages 6 through 12 (R)

Note: Results are based on comprehensive reviews of the evidence. The letters in parentheses in the table above correspond to a strong causal study in the comprehensive evidence review of state minimum wage. Each strong causal study reviewed has been assigned a letter. A complete list of causal studies can be found in the references section at the end of this document. Comprehensive evidence reviews of each policy and strategy, as well as more details about our standards of evidence and review method, can be found at [pn3policy.org](https://pn3policy.org).

## WHAT DO WE STILL NEED TO LEARN ABOUT THE STATE MINIMUM WAGE?

### **Little Is Known About the Health Impacts of a Higher State Minimum Wage on Fathers and on Children Beyond Infancy**

No studies were identified for the evidence review that explore how the state minimum wage affects fathers specifically; more studies would be beneficial to understand the unique impact on fathers, especially within the context of policies that often affect fathers, such as child support. The bulk of the research on children focuses on birth outcomes, but more studies are necessary to understand the impact of higher state minimum wages on children's broader health and development.

### **More Research Is Needed to Identify the Best Ways to Increase the State Minimum Wage**

More studies are needed to understand the impact of state minimum wages that are higher than \$10, especially because seven states will have reached a minimum wage of \$15 by 2025. Research will be critical to determine whether minimum wages at the highest levels have any negative impact on factors such as employment. Also, understanding changes in the real value of the minimum wage (adjusted for inflation), rather than only the nominal value, should be included in future studies of the minimum wage.

### **Additional Studies Will Be Helpful to Further Understand the Effects of a State Minimum Wage on Other Policies**

More research is necessary to determine how the minimum wage could affect the child care market, given that many child care workers earn wages below the highest proposed minimum wage levels. Because a higher minimum wage incentivizes greater employment, access to affordable and high-quality child care will become even more critical. Unfortunately, higher wages sometimes push families just over the income eligibility level for some income-based public benefits, preventing families from receiving support, even though they may still need the assistance. More research on how increases in the minimum wage impact other income-based policies, such as child care subsidies, Medicaid, or SNAP, would be helpful.

### **Tracking and Evaluating How States Have Responded to COVID-19 Will Be Essential**

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, three states (Illinois, Nevada, and Oregon) and some municipalities in California, the District of Columbia, and Minnesota had scheduled minimum wage increases to be effective July 1, 2020, as part of a larger wage increase plan to be phased in over several years.<sup>12</sup> All of these states and municipalities continued with their plan following the onset of the pandemic. Virginia was set to have a minimum wage increase in January 2021, but in April 2020 Governor Ralph Northam introduced an amendment to the minimum wage bill that deferred the start date for this increase by four months (May 1, 2021).<sup>13</sup> As states continue to respond to the economic impact of the pandemic, changes to minimum wage policy should be monitored.

## HOW DO STATES VARY BASED ON THEIR ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A STATE MINIMUM WAGE OF \$10 OR GREATER?

Nineteen states have adopted and fully implemented a minimum wage of \$10 or greater.

### The Majority of States Have Made Progress Toward Increasing the State Minimum Wage, but More Progress Is Needed

Although only 19 states currently have a minimum wage of \$10 or greater, several others have made progress toward increasing their state minimum wages. Among the 32 states that currently do not have a \$10 minimum wage, eleven states have minimum wages that are higher than the federal minimum wage of \$7.25, and four states are set to increase to \$10 per hour in the coming years. In contrast, nine states have regressive policies that prohibit localities from establishing their own minimum wages.

#### How Do We Determine States' Progress Toward Implementing Effective Policies and Strategies?

Policy adoption does not typically happen quickly. States may introduce legislation several times before adopting a policy and take even more time to fully implement it. States in which there has been considerable legislative initiative have made greater progress toward and are likely closer to adopting and implementing a policy compared to states in which there has been little to no legislative initiative. Once a policy is adopted, some states make the benefits more generous over time, whereas other states may rescind benefits in bills during subsequent legislative sessions. This variation in the legislative process provides greater insights to state policy leaders on where their state stands relative to others.

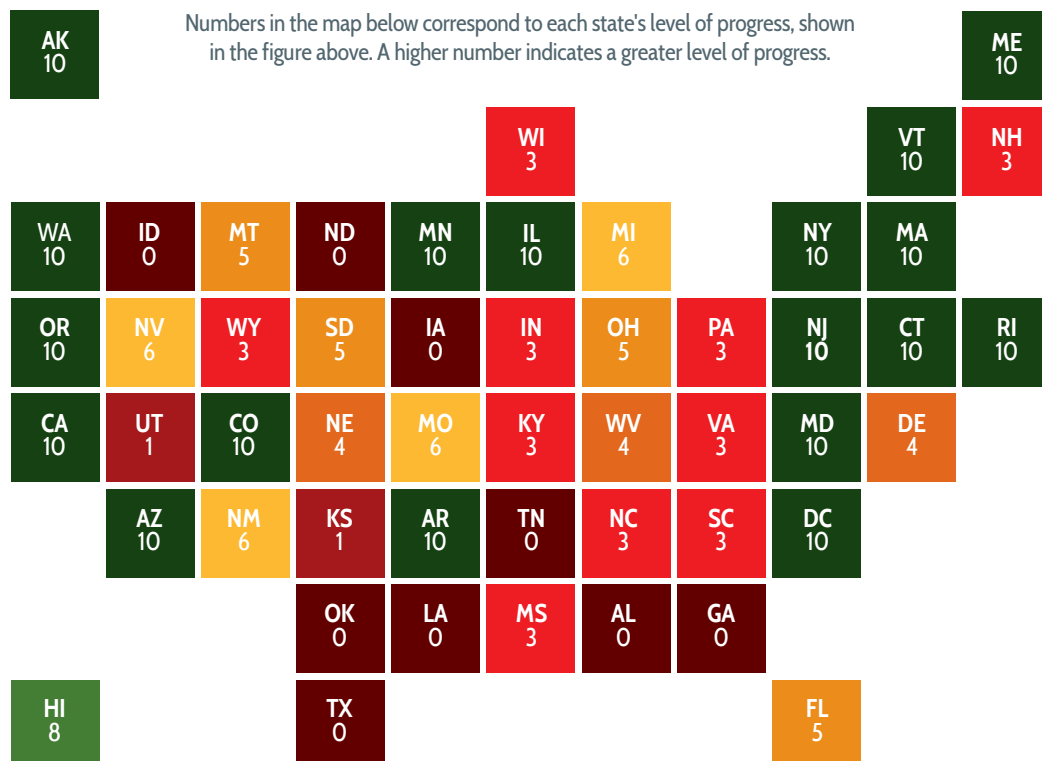
Relying on comprehensive research of state labor statutes, state labor departments, and filed legislation since 2017, we determined:

- whether (yes or no) each state had adopted and fully implemented a minimum wage of \$10 or greater by October 1, 2020, and
- what progress each state had made by June 30, 2020, toward adopting and fully implementing a minimum wage of \$10 or greater.

The figure on the following page shows the progress states have made to date toward adopting and fully implementing a minimum wage of \$10 or greater. For additional information, please refer to the Methods and Sources section of [pn3policy.org](https://pn3policy.org).

## Have States Adopted and Fully Implemented a Minimum Wage of \$10 or Greater?

Progress	Detail		# of States
Yes	10	Yes, and the state has scheduled or indexed wage increases.	18
	9		
	8	Yes, but no future increases above \$10 are currently scheduled.	1
	7		
Some Progress	6	No, but the state minimum wage is higher than the federal minimum wage, and the state has scheduled increases in place to raise the minimum wage to \$10 or greater.	4
	5	No, but the state minimum wage is higher than the federal minimum wage, and the state currently allows for scheduled or indexed increases.	4
	4	No, but the state minimum wage is higher than the federal minimum wage. However, there are no additional scheduled or indexed increases.	3
No	3	No, but there has been considerable legislative initiative to increase the state minimum wage.	10
	2		
	1	No, and there has been little legislative initiative to increase the state minimum wage.	2
Regressive	0	No, and the state has enacted legislation to prohibit localities from establishing their own minimum wages.	9

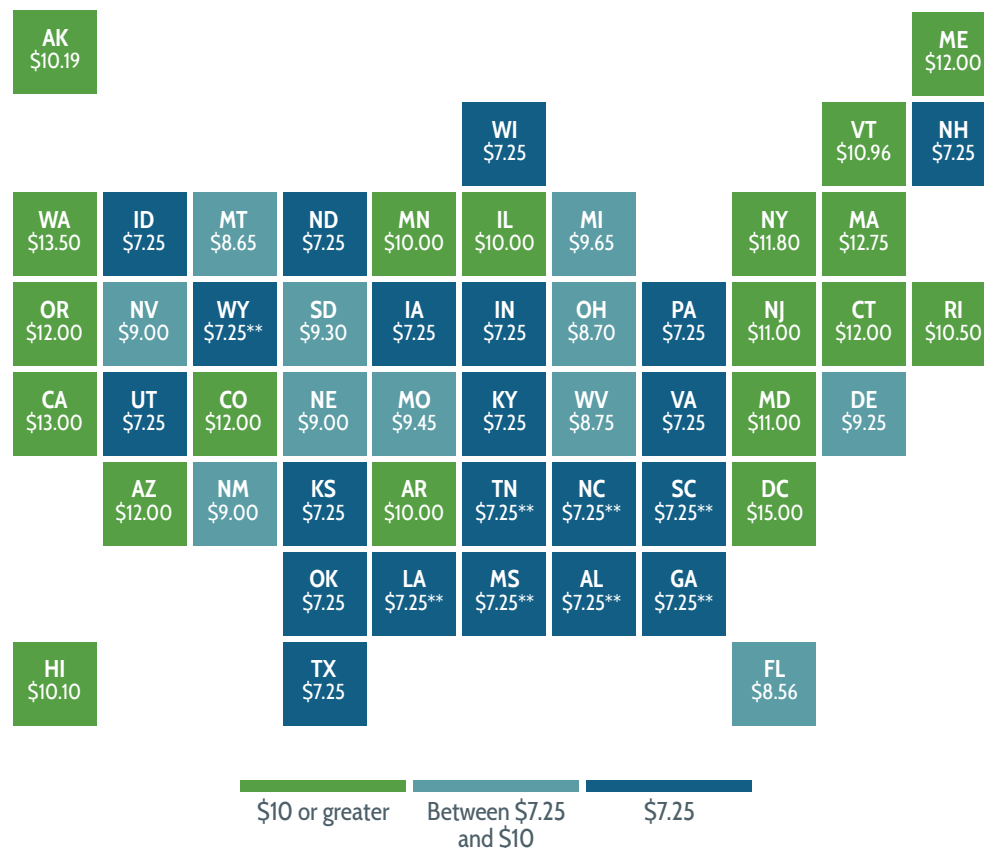


## The Minimum Wage Ranges Between \$7.25 and \$15 Across All States

Current state minimum wages range from \$7.25 to \$15 per hour. Seven states have approved gradual increases to \$15 that will become effective between July 1, 2020, and 2025.<sup>14</sup>

### State Hourly Minimum Wage

#### Nominal Minimum Wage



\*\* Indicates no state minimum wage legislated or set below federal; the \$7.25 federal minimum wage applies to Fair Labor Standards Act covered workers.

Source: State labor statutes and state labor department websites, as of October 1, 2020. For additional information, please refer to the Methods and Sources section of [pn3policy.org](https://pn3policy.org).

### States Vary in How They Set Their Minimum Wages

Twenty-one states have an effective minimum wage of \$7.25. Seven states set their minimum wage at \$7.25 by statute (Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin), whereas six other states set their minimum wage based on the federal minimum wage in the Fair Labor Standards Act. Five states have no state minimum wage defined in their legislation at all, and three have set their state minimum wage at a level lower than the federal minimum wage, which means that employers in those states are bound to the federal minimum wage.

### Some Large Cities Have Established Their Own Minimum Wages, but Some States Have Prohibited Cities from Doing So

Cities including Chicago, San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose, New York City, and Seattle have implemented local minimum wages that exceed the current state levels or that are being implemented on a faster phase-in schedule than approved state increases.<sup>15</sup> In contrast, nine states currently prohibit cities from enacting their own minimum wage laws.<sup>16</sup>



## The State Minimum Wage May Not Cover All Employees

States vary in the minimum wages set for tipped workers and individuals with disabilities, who are sometimes exempted from the prevailing minimum wage.<sup>17,18</sup> Nearly every state has an exception of some form for tipped workers, and most have varying levels of exception for workers with disabilities.

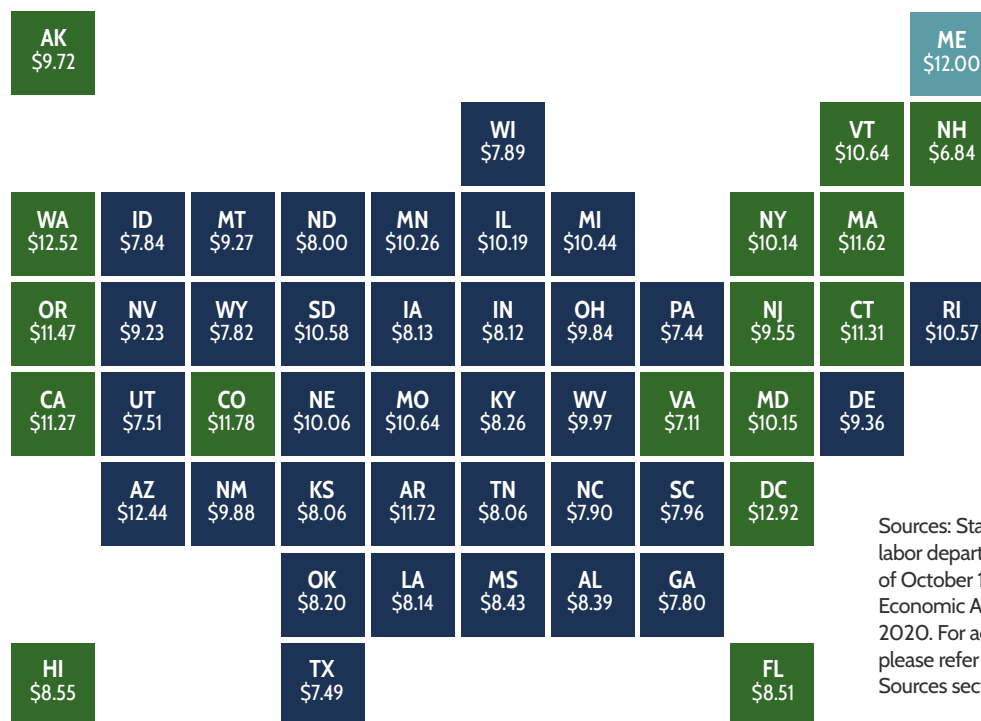
## The Real Value of Each State's Minimum Wage Varies

The current state hourly minimum wage ranges from a nominal value of \$7.25 (the federal minimum) to \$15 per hour. The nominal value refers to the current value of the wage without taking inflation, the cost of living, or other adjustments into account. The cost-of-living-adjusted (COLA) minimum wage accounts for the cost of living in a given state; in doing so, it provides an indication of the purchasing power of a state's nominal minimum wage. A minimum wage with a higher COLA value than nominal value has greater purchasing power than a minimum wage with a lower COLA value relative to the nominal value.

For example, two states with the same nominal minimum wage, Mississippi and New Hampshire at \$7.25, have different COLA minimum wages. In Mississippi, the COLA minimum wage is worth \$8.43, whereas the COLA minimum wage is worth less in New Hampshire, only \$6.84—meaning that the minimum wage can buy more in Mississippi than in New Hampshire, despite having the same nominal value. The COLA minimum wage ranges nationwide from a low of \$6.84 in New Hampshire to \$12.92 in the District of Columbia. The District of Columbia has both the highest nominal (\$15) and COLA minimum wage (\$12.92) in the country. The median state COLA minimum wage is \$9.36 compared to the median nominal wage of \$9.

## COLA State Hourly Minimum Wage

(Adjusted for Cost of Living)



Sources: State labor statutes state labor department websites, as of October 1, 2020; Bureau of Economic Analysis RPP, as of May 2020. For additional information, please refer to the Methods and Sources section of [pn3policy.org](https://pn3policy.org).

COLA MW is GREATER than  
Nominal MW

COLA MW and Nominal MW  
are the SAME

COLA MW is LESS than  
Nominal MW

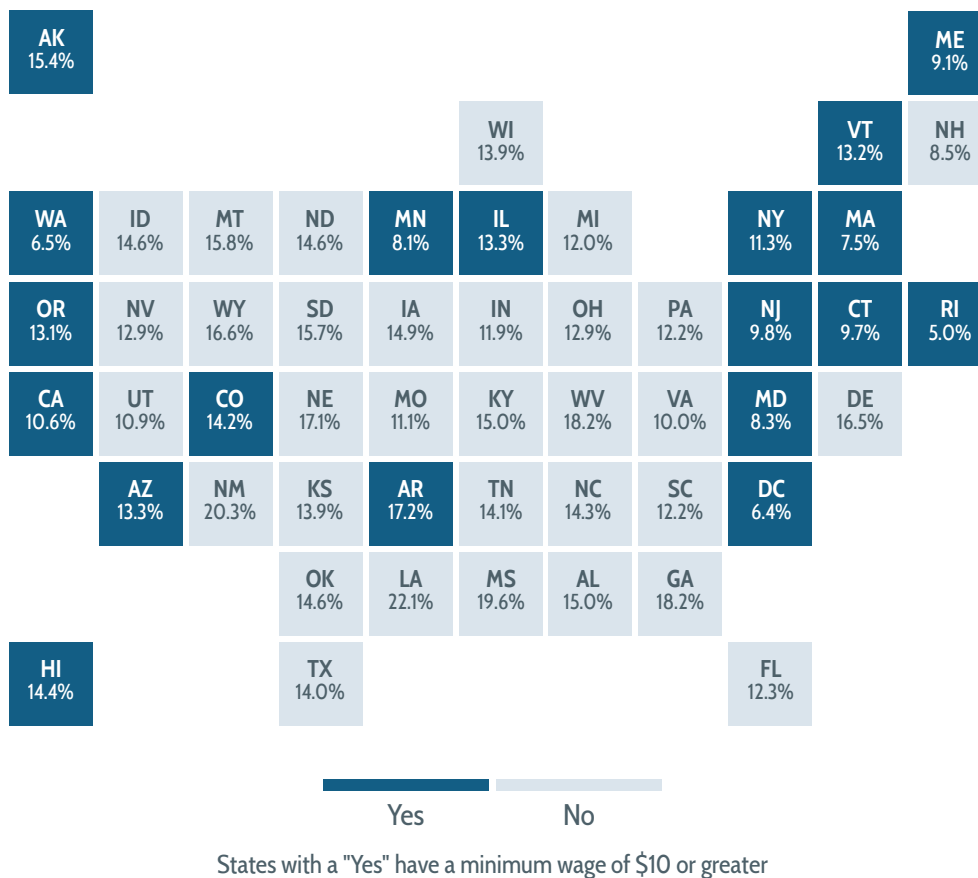


## An Increase in the Minimum Wage Would Affect a Significant Number of Families

The percentage of parents with children under age 3 who earn less than \$10 per hour ranges from 5% in Rhode Island to 22.1% in Louisiana. These parents would benefit from a minimum wage increase to \$10 per hour or above.

### Earning Less Than \$10 per Hour

% of parents with children under age 3 earning less than \$10 per hour



Source: State labor statutes and state labor department websites, as of October 1, 2020. 2017-2019 Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS ASEC) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS). For additional information, please refer to the Methods and Sources section of [pn3policy.org](https://pn3policy.org).



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