



Raising the Minimum Wage So N.C. Families Can Afford the Basics

North Carolina needs to create jobs that pay workers enough to afford the basics for themselves and their families so that everyone can prosper in our state.

Background

North Carolina needs an economy that works for all and ensures broadly shared prosperity. That means creating jobs that pay workers enough to afford the basics for themselves and their families—enough to buy groceries, pay the rent, put gas in the car, and keep their children in day care. Unfortunately, the jobs that paid decent wages are largely vanishing, as low-wage service jobs replace the manufacturing positions that once provided generations of North Carolinians with vital pathways to the middle class. This trend has only accelerated since the end of the Great Recession.

Raising the minimum wage in North Carolina provides a critical antidote to the ongoing boom in low-wage work. The state's current minimum wage is the same as the nation's—\$7.25 an hour. But 29 other states have raised their wage above the national floor, including conservative states like Nebraska, Arkansas, South Dakota, and Missouri. North Carolina has the opportunity to join this movement.

Current Context

- According to the Living Income Standard—a market-based assessment of what it takes to make ends meet—a **family with one adult and one child needs to earn \$33,700 per year (16.20/hr) in order to afford the basics.**
- But at the current North Carolina minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour, **a full-time minimum-wage worker earns approximately \$15,080 per year.** This is approximately \$1,000 less than the federal poverty level for 2016 for a family of one adult and one child, and more than **\$18,000 less than what it truly takes to make ends meet** according to the LIS.
- An estimated **1.3 million workers in NC would benefit from raising the minimum wage to \$12/hr**, including 750,000 women.
- **Raising the wage doesn't just help high-schoolers looking for summer jobs, it helps working people, parents, and children.** Ninety percent (1.2 million) of the people who would benefit from raising the wage to \$12 are older than 20, and another 730,000 children will benefit from their parents' raises.
- **Raising the minimum wage helps the economy save jobs** by boosting consumer spending, reducing employee turnover, and increasing business sales.

Questions for Candidates

- It takes \$16.20 an hour for a family to afford the basics. Will you support raising the state's minimum wage to at least \$12/hr by 2020 and \$15/hr by 2022?
- If no, what do you think the minimum wage should be, and how else should a family make up the difference between what their job pays them and what they need to survive?

