



Why a Georgia Minimum Wage Campaign?

The Need is Clear

Georgia's current minimum wage of \$5.15/hr keeps hard working families trapped in poverty, rather than providing a means to a decent standard of living. Although Congress passed legislation to raise the federal minimum wage to \$7.25/hr by July 2009, action is still needed in Georgia. Some workers in our state are not covered by the federal minimum wage. Unless the state legislature takes action, these hard working people can still legally be paid as little as \$5.15/hr.

Other States are Taking Action

Thirty two states and the District of Columbia have passed state minimum wage rates that are higher than the federal level. Many southern states – including North Carolina, Arkansas, Kentucky, Missouri, and Florida – have already increased their state's minimum wages. Ten states have indexed their wage levels to inflation, guaranteeing employees a pay increase when the cost of living increases. Several states have also increased their tipped credit, to restored the direct pay of waiters and waitresses to the original level of 50% of the regular minimum wage.

An Effective Policy to Reduce Working Poverty

Eighty percent of minimum wage earners are adults. Many provide more than 50% of their families' incomes or are the sole providers for their families. The 'typical' minimum wage earner in Georgia is an adult woman supporting other family members.

Public Opinion Supports Raising the Minimum Wage

- A January 2008 statewide poll found that 9 in 10 voters say it is important to ensure that no worker in Georgia is paid by their employer below the federal minimum wage.
- A 2006 University of Georgia poll of registered voters found that 90% of respondents support an increase in the minimum wage. This includes more than 80% of white, male, rural, and Republican respondents.
- A 2006 Gallup poll showed that nearly 50% of all small business owners favor increasing the minimum wage.

Get Involved: Support HB 290

Arrange a minimum wage presentation for your congregation, union, or community group. Write a letter to the editor of your newspaper supporting a minimum wage increase. Meet with your state legislator. Attend GA Living Wage Coalition meetings. For more information, contact:

9to5, Atlanta Working Women: 404/222-0037
Georgia Hunger Coalition: 404/622-7778
Athens Economic Justice Coalition: 706/549-1142
Or Visit: <http://www.georgialivingwage.org>

2009 Minimum Wage Legislation in Georgia

HB 290, introduced by Rep. Doug McKillip (D-Athens) will:

Raise the state minimum wage (currently at \$5.15/hour) to the federal rate (\$7.25/hour by July 2009). Georgia workers who are covered by state but not federal minimum wage law include the fishing industry and some seasonal recreation workers. They deserve the same increase as other low-wage workers nationwide!

- Include tipped workers under state minimum wage law. Increase the tip credit, which is currently \$2.13/hr and was not raised by the recent federal increase, to 50% of the regular minimum wage.
- Include pay increases for workers now excluded by both federal and state law, such as home care workers. These workers, who provide basic, non-medical care for the elderly, ill, and disabled, are often adult women of color and can now be legally paid less than the federal minimum wage. Minimum wage laws in several states specifically cover this large and growing workforce. Georgia should also.
- Index the state minimum wage to inflation. When the cost of living increases, the wages of low-income Georgia workers should increase proportionally.

Georgia and national Minimum Wage trends

Once the federal minimum wage increase has fully taken affect in July 2009, eight states and the District of Columbia will already have minimum wages that are higher than the federal level of \$7.25/hour. Several more states are working to pass legislation to raise their state minimum wage above this level in the coming years.

The GA Minimum Wage Coalition supports legislation in the 2009 General Assembly to cover ALL of Georgia's workers at the \$7.25/hr level. No workers in Georgia should be left behind the federal minimum wage increase. We will also support legislation, expected to be introduced in late 2009, to increase the federal minimum wage, so that work can truly become a route out of poverty.

What YOU Can Do!

1. Contact your state House and Senate members, reminding them of the necessity to raise Georgia's minimum wage. To find out who represents you and how to contact them, go to: <http://sos.georgia.gov/cgi-bin/newlocator.asp> or <http://www.votesmart.org>.
2. Contact the House Industrial Relations Committee and ask that they hold a hearing on HB 290 this year. (Committee names and contact info provided separately). Call Committee Chair Rep Mike Coan (R-Lawrenceville) at 404.656.6801 and ask that working people's issues be heard!
3. Join the Georgia Minimum Wage Coalition. Contact us at livingwageatl@hotmail.com or 404.222.0037. Look for updated campaign alerts at our website: www.georgialivingwage.org.