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LATEST NEWS

Business First of Columbus - 12:18 PM EDT Wednesday

Think tank pushes minimum wage hike

The value of the minimum wage has fallen to its lowest point since 1989 and ought to be raised, according to a Cleveland think tank.

When adjusted for inflation, the federal minimum wage of \$5.15 an hour is at its second-lowest point in the last 50 years, according to a Tuesday news release from [Policy Matters Ohio](#), a liberal political interest group. The federal minimum wage was last raised in 1997.

Ohio is free to raise its own minimum wage above the federal level, although Ohio's minimum wage is set at \$4.25 an hour. Thirteen states set their minimum wages above the federal level, and only Ohio and Kansas have lower minimum wages.

Many business groups and Republicans oppose a minimum wage hike, fearing it would place too heavy a burden on businesses. State Sen. C.J. Prentiss, D-Cleveland, recently introduced a bill in the Ohio legislature to raise the minimum wage to \$7.15 by 2007.

At \$5.15 an hour, a full-time minimum wage worker makes \$10,712 a year, according to Policy Matters Ohio. That's far less than the federal poverty threshold of \$26,123 for a family of four.

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