



PRESS STATEMENT

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Ohio minimum wage tracks inflation to \$9.30 in 2022

Wage still worth far less than 1968 peak

Ohio's minimum wage will adjust to \$9.30 per hour on January 1, from its current level of \$8.80. The change comes as an automatic adjustment since Ohio voters passed a minimum wage increase in 2006 and tied it to inflation so it would keep pace with rising prices. COVID-19's continued havoc on the job market makes workforce data unreliable to determine how many Ohioans will be affected by this year's change, but the smaller 15-cent adjustment in January 2019 affected some 84,000. Policy Matters Ohio researcher Michael Shields gave the following statement:

“Ohioans came together in 2006 to stand up for working people by voting to raise the minimum wage. Voters made a wise decision to ensure the wage doesn’t lose its buying power over time. Had Congress done the same when they set the federal minimum wage in 1968, it would be worth about \$13 per hour today. For years, the adjustment has served as a safeguard against loss of buying power for Ohio’s lowest-paid workers. But working people in Ohio deserve a true raise.

“Raising Ohio’s minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2026 would [mean nearly 1.6 million Ohioans](#) get paid more fairly for their work. It would also help to address the [historic undervaluing of women’s and Black and brown people’s work](#). The increase would boost pay for 36% of women and 22% of men, as well as 45% of Latinx Ohioans, 44% of Black Ohioans and 26% of white and Asian Ohioans.

“Many of [these Ohioans are the frontline workers](#) facing higher risk of COVID-19 as they deliver vital services we all rely on, including immigrant workers with few workplace protections. Retail and restaurant workers each comprise a fifth of all workers who would benefit; healthcare workers make up a further 16.3%. Everyone deserves a fair return for their work; the people doing the critical work to keep us safe and fed through the pandemic should not have to worry about having enough to cover the basics.

“To do the most good, the minimum wage must cover everyone. A fifth of Ohioans who would gain from raising the minimum wage are restaurant and food workers, but Ohio law carves out tipped workers from receiving the full minimum wage. This is one reason that [waitresses and waiters are among Ohio’s lowest paid](#): just \$9.56 per hour last year at the median, less than the poverty level for a family of three based on full-time work. Creating a just economy that dignifies everyone — including the women and people of color who comprise most restaurant servers — requires replacing this practice with one fair minimum wage that covers all working Ohioans.

“Across the country, Americans are demanding — and winning — fairer pay. Raising the minimum wage to \$15 would bring Ohio in line with [11 other states and D.C.](#), where two in every five Americans live.

“COVID-19 has reminded us how much we rely on the work of our fellow Ohioans doing critical frontline jobs. As we close out the second year grappling with the pandemic, we cannot afford to forget. It’s time to pass a \$15 minimum wage that meets the cost of living and honors the value of work.”