



PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

FEDERAL MINIMUM WAGE

– Questionnaire –

SAMPLE PROVIDED BY: Nielsen Scarborough
SAMPLE SIZE: 2,700 Respondents

FIELD DATES: February 1 - 14, 2023
MARGIN OF ERROR: +/- 1.9%

Q1 through Q29b released previously.

Now let's turn to another issue: whether the federal minimum wage should be increased.

Currently, the federal minimum wage is \$7.25 an hour. For a full-time worker, this is an annual income of about \$14,500 before taxes.

A single person earning this minimum wage and working full-time earns slightly above the federal poverty line. However, a worker earning minimum wage who has one or more children, or a spouse who is unemployed, earns less than the federal poverty line.

As you may know, states cannot have a minimum wage that is below the federal one. But they can raise it higher. Most states have passed laws to raise their state's minimum wage above the federal level:

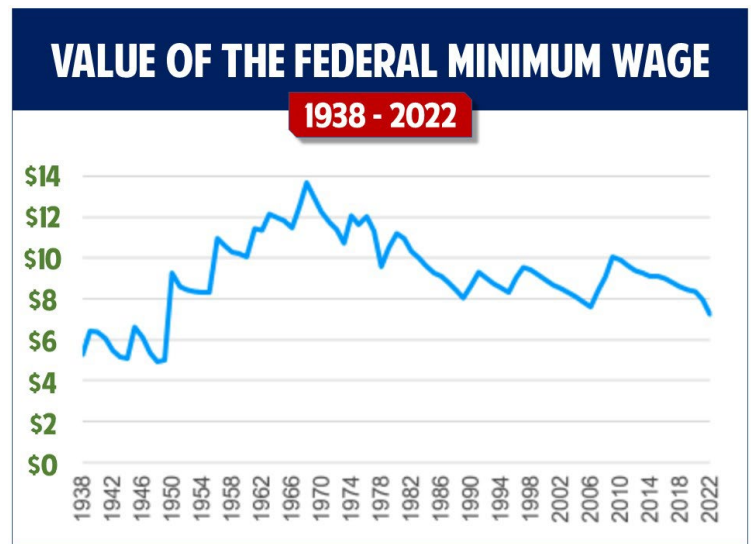
- 7 have raised it to \$15 an hour,
- 14 have raised it to about \$12,
- 10 have raised it to between \$8.75 to \$11.50, and

Nineteen states do not have a minimum wage higher than the federal one.

Because of inflation, the purchasing power of the federal minimum wage changes. To the right is showing the value of the federal minimum wage over time.

Raising the minimum wage is controversial among economists. Some economists argue that increasing it could lead some employers not to create new jobs and even lay off employees. Other economists say this is not the case, pointing to cases when the minimum wage was increased in one state but not in another neighboring state, yet employment rates were no different between the states.

Here are two arguments for and against raising the federal minimum wage.



Q30. People who work full time should not have to live in poverty – on the brink of homelessness, unable to afford basic necessities. Increasing the minimum wage would raise many workers and their children above the poverty line. This allows

them to not just barely survive, but to invest in themselves and their family and build a better life.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	51.0%	26.5%	77.5%	11.6%	10.8%	22.4%	0.1%
Republicans	28.0%	31.6%	59.6%	21.6%	18.7%	40.3%	0.0%
Democrats	74.5%	21.0%	95.5%	2.6%	1.6%	4.2%	0.3%
Independents	50.1%	27.1%	77.2%	9.3%	13.4%	22.7%	0.1%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
Very red	46.8%	27.9%	74.7%	12.9%	12.2%	25.1%	0.2%
Somewhat red	43.7%	26.8%	70.5%	17.4%	12.1%	29.5%	0.0%
Lean red	45.7%	29.4%	75.1%	12.3%	12.7%	25.0%	0.0%
Lean blue	52.2%	27.0%	79.2%	9.5%	10.8%	20.3%	0.4%
Somewhat blue	53.9%	27.3%	81.2%	9.1%	9.7%	18.8%	0.0%
Very blue	64.8%	20.0%	84.8%	8.2%	6.8%	15.0%	0.3%

Q31. If we raise the minimum wage, some employers will have to lay off workers because they cannot pay the higher wages. Some may also find it more cost-efficient to automate the job. That will especially hurt workers with few skills who are less likely to be rehired and may be thrown into poverty. It will also hurt younger workers who accept low wages to get work experience.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	21.5%	31.4%	52.9%	23.0%	23.9%	46.9%	0.3%
Republicans	36.0%	40.1%	76.1%	16.3%	7.3%	23.6%	0.4%
Democrats	7.1%	23.5%	30.6%	29.3%	39.8%	69.1%	0.3%
Independents	21.0%	29.8%	50.8%	24.1%	25.1%	49.2%	0.0%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
Very red	26.3%	33.0%	59.3%	18.3%	22.1%	40.4%	0.3%
Somewhat red	21.4%	36.8%	58.2%	22.8%	18.9%	41.7%	0.1%
Lean red	23.4%	30.9%	54.3%	23.7%	21.8%	45.5%	0.3%
Lean blue	22.1%	30.6%	52.7%	22.2%	24.6%	46.8%	0.4%
Somewhat blue	20.7%	33.2%	53.9%	22.0%	24.1%	46.1%	0.0%
Very blue	14.1%	23.3%	37.4%	29.1%	33.0%	62.1%	0.5%

Here are two more arguments for and against raising the federal minimum wage.

Q32. The current minimum wage lets companies get away with paying poverty-level wages, since the government then fills the gap with poverty programs like food stamps. Raising the minimum wage will lessen the need for these programs and save the government money.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	34.0%	33.2%	67.2%	19.2%	13.3%	32.5%	0.3%
Republicans	18.1%	31.1%	49.2%	28.4%	22.1%	50.5%	0.3%

Democrats	50.8%	35.0%	85.8%	10.7%	3.1%	13.8%	0.5%
Independents	32.1%	33.8%	65.9%	17.9%	16.3%	34.2%	0.0%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
Very red	31.0%	32.0%	63.0%	20.1%	16.6%	36.7%	0.3%
Somewhat red	31.1%	31.4%	62.5%	25.6%	11.4%	37.0%	0.5%
Lean red	30.7%	34.3%	65.0%	20.4%	14.2%	34.6%	0.3%
Lean blue	35.3%	31.1%	66.4%	18.5%	14.7%	33.2%	0.4%
Somewhat blue	33.5%	37.4%	70.9%	15.7%	13.2%	28.9%	0.3%
Very blue	42.6%	32.9%	75.5%	14.8%	9.5%	24.3%	0.1%

Q33. A federal minimum wage does not really make sense. The cost of living varies widely across the country. We should not try to have a one-size-fits-all minimum wage. It should be left up to the states and cities around the country to decide if they need a minimum wage and how much it should be.¹

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	29.4%	32.1%	61.5%	18.6%	19.6%	38.2%	0.4%
Republicans	47.7%	35.2%	82.9%	11.2%	5.4%	16.6%	0.5%
Democrats	11.7%	28.6%	40.3%	26.2%	33.0%	59.2%	0.4%
Independents	28.0%	32.9%	60.9%	17.9%	21.2%	39.1%	0.0%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
Very red	29.5%	37.2%	66.7%	17.8%	15.2%	33.0%	0.3%
Somewhat red	32.5%	33.8%	66.3%	16.2%	16.6%	32.8%	0.9%
Lean red	32.6%	31.4%	64.0%	18.4%	17.4%	35.8%	0.2%
Lean blue	31.9%	30.2%	62.1%	18.0%	19.9%	37.9%	0.1%
Somewhat blue	25.9%	32.1%	58.0%	17.8%	23.9%	41.7%	0.3%
Very blue	21.6%	29.1%	50.7%	24.1%	24.6%	48.7%	0.6%

Right now, the primary proposal in Congress is to gradually raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour over a five-year period.²

For a full-time worker, this would be an annual income of about \$30,000 before taxes. This would put them above the federal poverty line, even if they were the only worker in a three-person household.

The Congressional Budget Office³ estimates that, by 2028, this proposal would:

- Increase the wages of about 18 million workers
- Bring about 0.3 million people above the federal poverty line

¹ [Minimum Wage Levels — Let the States and Free Markets Decide](#), by Rep. Linda Upmeyer, Alec.org, Jun 2018

² [Raise the Wage Act \(H.R. 582, S. 150\)](#) would raise the federal minimum wage to \$15, but would go further by applying that increase to tipped workers and workers with disabilities.

³ CBO. (2021) [How Increasing the Federal Minimum Wage Could Affect Employment and Family Income](#), parameters: \$15 minimum wage by 2027, no change for tipped workers, not indexed to inflation or median income. Total employed in US is roughly 160 million.

At the same time, the CBO also estimates that this would lead employers to reduce the number of people they employ in 2028 by about 0.5 million, or about a 0.3% reduction in total employment.⁴

Q34. How acceptable do you find the proposal to gradually raise the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$15.00 over a 5-year period?

	(0-4)	5	(6-10)	Ref./DK
National	35.2%	12.6%	52.1%	0.1%
Republicans	54.6%	14.9%	30.5%	0.1%
Democrats	14.8%	10.2%	75.0%	0.1%
Independents	37.6%	13.1%	49.2%	0.0%
Cook's PVI (D-R)				
Very red	42.8%	12.7%	44.6%	0.0%
Somewhat red	41.9%	11.8%	46.4%	0.0%
Lean red	38.3%	13.1%	48.4%	0.2%
Lean blue	32.9%	13.0%	54.1%	0.0%
Somewhat blue	29.1%	14.5%	56.4%	0.0%
Very blue	26.4%	10.2%	63.2%	0.2%

Q35. In conclusion, do you favor or oppose the proposal to raise the minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$15.00 over a 5-year period?

	Favor	Oppose	Ref/DK
National	65.0%	34.5%	0.5%
Republicans	40.9%	58.5%	0.6%
Democrats	89.8%	9.8%	0.4%
Independents	63.7%	35.9%	0.4%
Cook's PVI (D-R)			
Very red	57.0%	42.7%	0.3%
Somewhat red	58.2%	41.1%	0.6%
Lean red	59.6%	39.6%	0.8%
Lean blue	65.8%	33.8%	0.4%
Somewhat blue	71.5%	28.0%	0.5%
Very blue	78.8%	20.9%	0.3%

[If Oppose (Q35=2) or skip, Present Q36 and Q37; otherwise skip to Q38]

Q36. Another proposal is to raise the minimum wage to \$10.00 over a 3-year period.⁵ How acceptable do you find this proposal?

	(0-4)	5	(6-10)	Ref./DK	Favor Min Wage @ \$15/Hour	Total Acceptable at least \$10Hour
National	18.0%	5.8%	11.2%	0.0%	65.0%	76.2%
Republicans	29.4%	10.5%	19.2%	0.1%	40.9%	60.1%
Democrats	4.5%	1.0%	4.7%	0.0%	89.8%	94.5%
Independents	22.2%	6.3%	7.8%	0.0%	63.7%	71.5%
Cook's PVI (D-R)						
Very red	18.0%	8.7%	16.3%	0.0%	57.0%	73.3%
Somewhat red	20.2%	8.3%	13.3%	0.0%	58.2%	71.5%
Lean red	21.2%	6.2%	12.8%	0.1%	59.6%	72.4%
Lean blue	18.5%	5.5%	10.1%	0.0%	65.8%	75.9%
Somewhat blue	15.9%	3.5%	9.0%	0.0%	71.5%	80.5%
Very blue	12.8%	2.7%	5.7%	0.0%	78.8%	84.5%

⁴ BLS, Table A-1: Total employed in US is roughly 160 million.

⁵ Higher Wages for American Workers Act of 2021 (S. 478), by Sen. Tom Cotton

Q37. So, do you favor or oppose the proposal to raise the minimum wage to \$10.00 over a 3-year period?

	Favor	Oppose	Ref/DK	Favor Min Wage @ \$15/Hour	Total Favor @ at least \$10/Hour
National	16.7%	18.0%	0.2%	65.0%	81.7%
Republicans	29.3%	29.5%	0.3%	40.9%	70.2%
Democrats	5.8%	4.5%	0.0%	89.8%	95.6%
Independents	13.4%	22.4%	0.5%	63.7%	77.1%
Cook's PVI (D-R)					
Very red	23.8%	18.6%	0.6%	57.0%	80.8%
Somewhat red	21.4%	20.3%	0.0%	58.2%	79.6%
Lean red	19.4%	20.6%	0.4%	59.6%	79.0%
Lean blue	14.3%	19.6%	0.3%	65.8%	80.1%
Somewhat blue	14.1%	14.3%	0.0%	71.5%	85.6%
Very blue	7.9%	13.0%	0.2%	78.8%	86.7%

Q38. We would like to know more exactly what you think the minimum wage should be. What do you think the minimum wage should be **five years from now**? You can choose any number you like. Please include a decimal point when entering dollars and cents.

\$ _____ per hour

	Median
National	15
Republicans	12
Democrats	17
Independents	15
Cook's PVI (D-R)	
Very red	14
Somewhat red	15
Lean red	15
Lean blue	15
Somewhat blue	15
Very blue	17.5

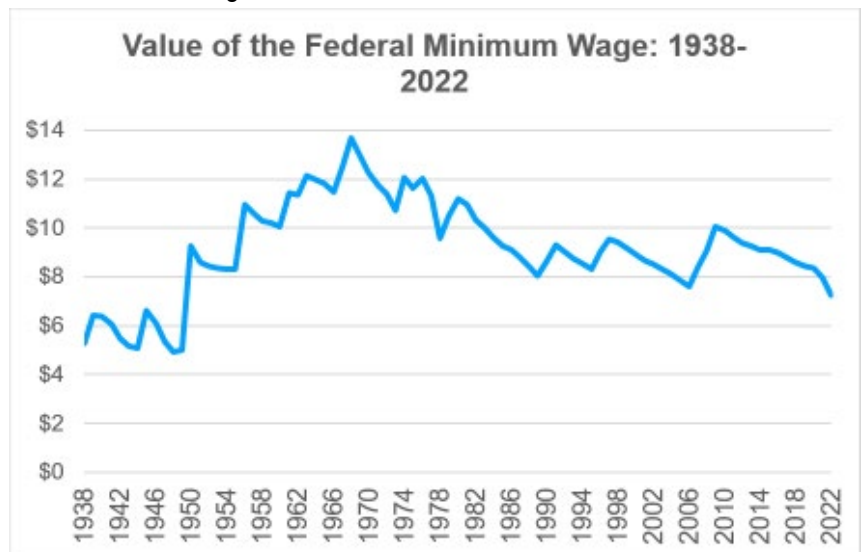
Another controversial issue is whether the federal minimum wage should be adjusted for inflation. Presently, it is not adjusted, and it never has been. It has always been increased only by a new act of Congress. Thus, with inflation, the purchasing power of the federal minimum wage goes down until Congress acts to raise it.

The last time the minimum wage was increased was 2009. Since then, the value of the minimum wage has gone down by \$2.80.

Here again is the graph showing the value of the minimum wage over time.

There is currently a proposal to adjust the federal minimum wage each year according to the rate of inflation.

Here is an argument in favor:



Q39. It makes no sense to have the purchasing power of the minimum wage on a constant downward slide, followed by a periodic catch-up. It is not fair to minimum-wage workers and it creates lots of uncertainty not only for workers, but also for employers who need to make long-term plans. Finally, the minimum wage should not be subject to the special interest lobbying that Congress gets caught in.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	34.3%	39.7%	74.0%	16.4%	9.0%	25.4%	0.6%
Republicans	18.2%	44.3%	62.5%	22.2%	14.8%	37.0%	0.5%
Democrats	50.5%	36.7%	87.2%	9.9%	2.2%	12.1%	0.7%
Independents	33.9%	36.5%	70.4%	18.1%	11.1%	29.2%	0.3%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
Very red	28.4%	42.3%	70.7%	18.4%	10.7%	29.1%	0.2%
Somewhat red	30.3%	42.0%	72.3%	16.9%	9.9%	26.8%	1.0%
Lean red	31.9%	39.0%	70.9%	19.2%	9.2%	28.4%	0.7%
Lean blue	32.8%	42.4%	75.2%	13.8%	10.3%	24.1%	0.7%
Somewhat blue	36.9%	40.3%	77.2%	15.4%	7.4%	22.8%	0.0%
Very blue	45.3%	33.6%	78.9%	14.3%	6.1%	20.4%	0.7%

Here is an argument against:

Q40. The minimum wage should not be on autopilot. Congress should be able to assess current economic conditions and decide whether it is best to raise the minimum wage or not. For example, when unemployment is high, raising the minimum wage can be a bad idea because it could lead employers to lay off workers. Furthermore, the states can and do raise the minimum wage, if they think it is needed.

	Very convincing	Somewhat convincing	Total convincing	Somewhat unconvincing	Very unconvincing	Total unconvincing	Ref/DK
National	17.4%	38.9%	56.3%	24.5%	18.9%	43.4%	0.3%
Republicans	25.9%	48.1%	74.0%	18.2%	7.3%	25.5%	0.4%
Democrats	8.3%	33.7%	42.0%	29.4%	28.6%	58.0%	0.1%
Independents	18.4%	30.2%	48.6%	27.8%	23.1%	50.9%	0.5%
Cook's PVI (D-R)							
Very red	19.9%	47.1%	67.0%	18.4%	14.6%	33.0%	0.0%
Somewhat red	18.8%	41.7%	60.5%	23.1%	16.2%	39.3%	0.2%
Lean red	15.3%	40.5%	55.8%	27.3%	16.4%	43.7%	0.5%
Lean blue	17.4%	38.4%	55.8%	25.3%	18.7%	44.0%	0.1%
Somewhat blue	17.4%	35.0%	52.4%	25.5%	21.9%	47.4%	0.2%
Very blue	15.7%	32.1%	47.8%	26.5%	25.1%	51.6%	0.7%

Q41. So, here again is the proposal: Adjust the minimum wage each year according to the rate of inflation.⁶

⁶ [Higher Wages for American Workers Act of 2021 \(S. 478\)](#), by Sen. Tom Cotton

How acceptable do you find this proposal?

	(0-4)	5	(6-10)	Ref./DK
National	36.5%	12.6%	50.6%	0.2%
Republicans	53.3%	14.9%	31.5%	0.3%
Democrats	19.6%	10.2%	70.0%	0.3%
Independents	37.0%	12.9%	50.1%	0.0%
Cook's PVI (D-R)				
Very red	42.9%	12.0%	44.9%	0.2%
Somewhat red	39.1%	16.8%	43.9%	0.1%
Lean red	38.8%	13.5%	47.3%	0.4%
Lean blue	36.9%	10.7%	52.1%	0.3%
Somewhat blue	31.8%	14.7%	53.1%	0.3%
Very blue	29.8%	7.1%	63.1%	0.0%

Q42. So, in conclusion, do you favor or oppose this proposal to adjust the minimum wage each year according to the rate of inflation?

	Favor	Oppose	Ref/DK
National	62.9%	36.6%	0.6%
Republicans	44.7%	55.0%	0.3%
Democrats	80.1%	19.1%	0.8%
Independents	64.9%	34.4%	0.7%
Cook's PVI (D-R)			
Very red	58.2%	41.6%	0.2%
Somewhat red	59.5%	40.3%	0.2%
Lean red	59.9%	39.7%	0.4%
Lean blue	62.7%	36.7%	0.5%
Somewhat blue	65.7%	33.9%	0.4%
Very blue	71.6%	26.9%	1.6%

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