

**WHEN WORK DOESN'T PAY:
MINIMUM WAGE FAMILIES IN
AMERICA**

A View from the States

Prepared by the Office of Senator Edward M. Kennedy
United States Senate
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The wages we pay our workers make a profound statement about who we are as a nation. The fundamental promise of the American Dream is that hard work will allow you to succeed and build a better life for your family.

Unfortunately, in the Bush economy, the American dream has become a false hope for far too many working families.

Americans are working harder than ever, and our economy is growing, but the working people whose sweat and toil make our nation run are being left behind. Profits and productivity are skyrocketing,¹ but most Americans' paychecks have not increased since the President took office.² At the same time, costs for essentials like gas, heat, and health care have climbed so high that families simply can't make ends meet.

Even more troubling is the fate of the poorest families. Low-income workers are facing rising poverty³ and growing hunger – almost 14 million hungry children still go to bed each night without knowing where their next meal is coming from.⁴

These hardworking families are reaching for the American Dream, but they keep falling short, because hard work is no longer a

¹ Corporate profits have grown 85% over inflation, and productivity has grown by more than 18% since Bush took office. Bureau of Economic Analysis, "Corporate Profits After Taxes" (First Quarter, 2006); Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Output per Hour for Nonfarm Businesses" (First Quarter, 2006).

² Wages for working Americans are up only 1%, and real median household income has declined by 4% under Bush's watch. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Average Hourly Earnings, Seasonally Adjusted" (May, 2006); Census Bureau, "Median Household Income" (2004).

³ The number of Americans living in poverty has increased by 5.4 million during the Bush Administration. See U.S. Census Bureau, Historical Poverty Tables, *available at* <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/histpov/hstpov2.html> (accessed June 26, 2006).

⁴ Since President Bush took office one million more Americans are classified as hungry or on the verge of hunger. United States Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States," (2004).

path out of poverty. Work just doesn't pay like it used to. And nowhere is this more evident than in the fate of minimum wage workers.

For nine years, the federal government has failed to increase the minimum wage by even a penny. It has remained unchanged at \$5.15 an hour throughout that time. The federal minimum wage totals just \$10,700 a year for a full-time, full-year minimum wage worker—almost \$6,000 below the poverty line for a family of three.⁵ As a result, minimum wage workers are falling farther and farther behind. (See figures 1 and 2.) In the 1970s, the minimum wage amounted to about half of what average Americans were earning. Today, it is only 31 percent of average wages – the greatest disparity since World War II.

⁵ 2006 Federal Poverty Guidelines, *available at* <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/06poverty.shtml> (accessed June 26, 2006).

Figure 1: The Real Value of the Minimum Wage

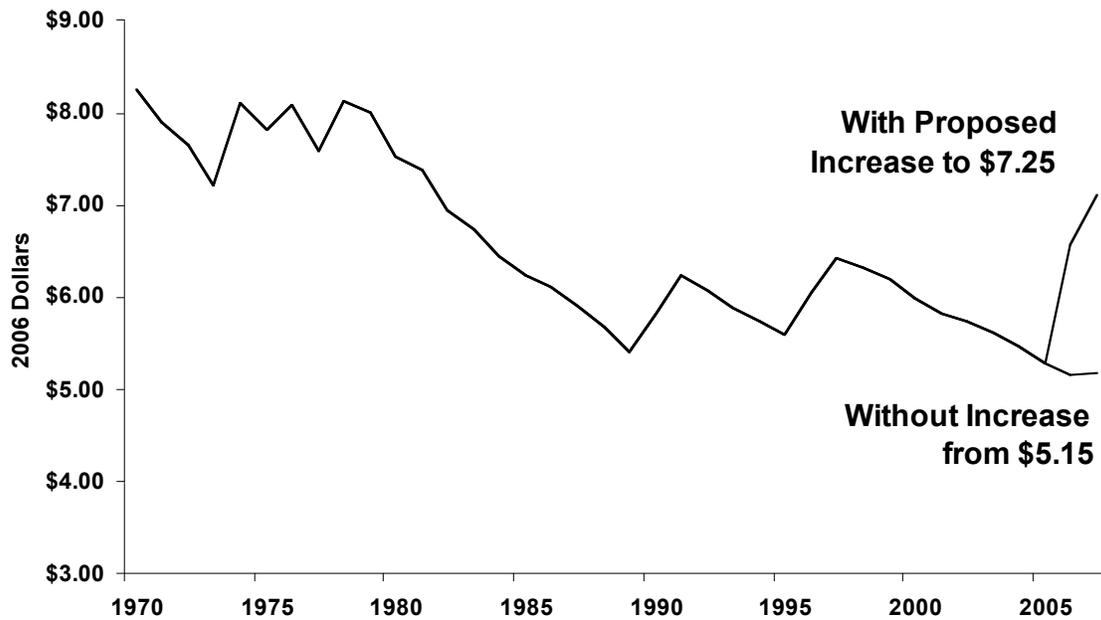


Figure 1 source: CPI-adjusted value of the minimum wage.

Figure 2: Real Wages and Productivity 1960-2005

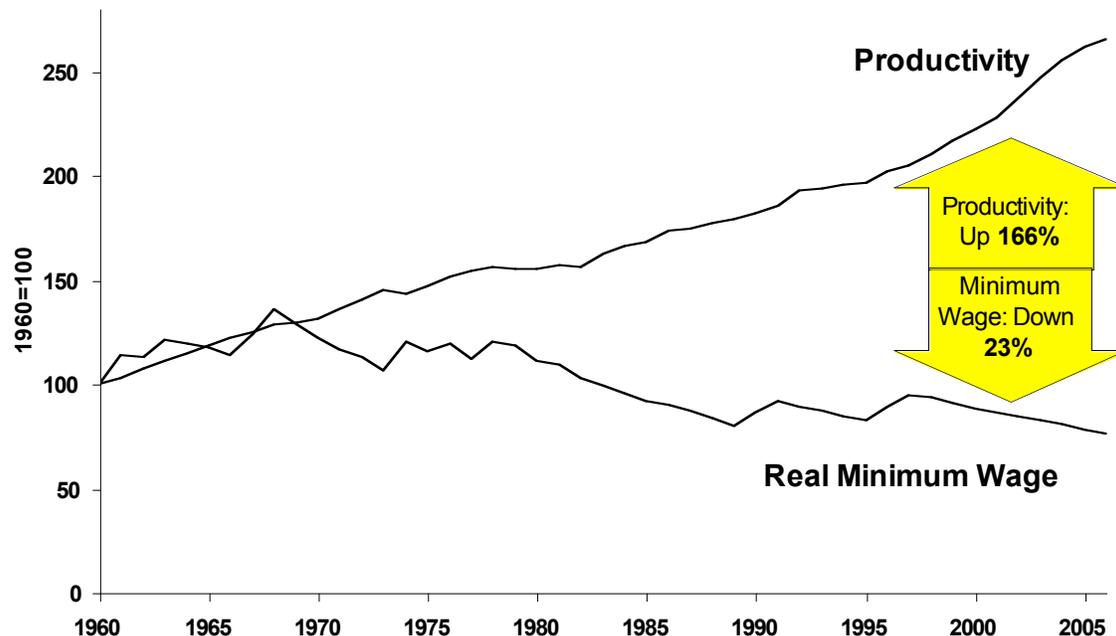


Figure 2 source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, non-farm business productivity, annual averages

For minimum wage families facing rising costs and stagnant wages, the numbers of the family budget just don't add up, and they are forced to make impossible choices – Do I pay the rent or the doctor's bill? Do I pay the heat or put gas in the car?

Even costs of basic necessities are too great for a minimum wage family to bear. Gasoline prices are rising– up 70% since Bush took office.⁶ In all 50 states and the District of Columbia, minimum wage earners must work for more than a day just to make enough money to fill a tank of gas, and in 14 states minimum wage earners

⁶ Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration, adjusted by CPI-U, (2006).

must work until lunchtime Tuesday to pay for the gas to drive to work.⁷

Child care costs have been rising as well. Today, child care often costs up to \$10,000 per year for one child – more than the cost of public college tuition. Yet, a family with both parents working full-time at the minimum wage earns only \$21,400 a year, so child care can total almost half of their annual income.⁸

And the health care crisis has dealt a crippling blow to those working for the lowest wages. Low-wage workers are far more likely to be among the nearly forty-six million Americans without health insurance.⁹ Yet, buying health insurance is an impossible dream for a minimum wage family. The average family premium now costs \$10,880 – more than a minimum wage earner makes in a year.¹⁰

Raising the minimum wage would help these hardworking families build a better life by making work pay again. An increase to \$7.25 an hour would benefit 6.6 million workers directly, and another 8.3 million workers indirectly.¹¹ It would give a family with one minimum wage earner another \$4,400 a year to spend on education, child care, paying the rent, or just putting food on the table.

With the federal minimum wage lagging behind, some states have already led the way with increases of their own. Four states

⁷ Christian E. Weller, Center for American Progress, “Double Whammy: Gas Prices Hammer Minimum Wage Workers,” (2006).

⁸ Karen Schulman, Children’s Defense Fund, “Key Facts: Essential Information about Child Care, Early Education, and School-Age Care,” (2003).

⁹ United States Census Bureau, 2004.

¹⁰ Kaiser Family Foundation, “Employer Health Benefits 2005 Annual Survey.”

¹¹ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey data.

have already increased their minimum wages to \$7.25 an hour or higher.¹² Another sixteen states and the District of Columbia have minimum wages higher than \$5.15 an hour, but less than \$7.25.¹³ But too many Americans are still left behind. No one who works hard for a living should live in poverty, and the federal government owes *all* minimum wage workers a well-earned raise.

Opponents of a raise in the minimum wage often make dire predictions about supposed adverse impacts on employment and the economy. But study after study shows that there is simply no evidence that a higher minimum wage leads to higher unemployment, and there is substantial evidence that a responsible minimum wage increase does not affect employment rates at all.¹⁴

In fact, in many ways, increasing the minimum wage adds to our economic strength and growth. Minimum wage workers spend their paychecks quickly in businesses in their communities. That additional money goes directly into the local economy as it is spent on food, rent, and other necessities.

In the seven decades since the federal minimum wage was established, Congress has provided regular increases to enable the wage to keep pace with inflation, providing even the lowest-paid

¹² These states are Connecticut (\$7.40), Oregon (\$7.50), Vermont (\$7.25), and Washington (\$7.63).

¹³ The states are Alaska (\$7.15), Arkansas (\$6.25, effective Oct. 1, 2006), California (\$6.75), Delaware (\$6.15), the District of Columbia (\$7.00), Florida (\$6.40), Hawaii (\$6.75), Illinois (\$6.50), Maine (\$6.50), Maryland (\$6.15), Massachusetts (\$6.75), Michigan (\$6.95), Minnesota (\$6.15), New Jersey (\$6.15), New York (\$6.75), Rhode Island (\$7.10), and Wisconsin (\$6.50).

¹⁴ Jeff Chapman, Economic Policy Institute, "Employment and the Minimum Wage: Evidence from Recent State Labor Trends," (2004). In one of the seminal studies, David Card and Alan B. Krueger found that the 1992 New Jersey state minimum wage increase had no negative effect on employment in New Jersey's fast-food industry. David Card and Alan Krueger, "Minimum Wages and Employment: A case study of the fast-food industry in New Jersey and Pennsylvania," *American Economic Review*, vol. 90 (5), 1397-1420 (2000).

Americans with a path to success through hard work. But in recent years, we've abandoned this fundamental tenet of the American Dream. By failing to increase the minimum wage for nine long years, Congress has left millions of American workers without a raise for the second longest stretch on record, and has broken a promise to working Americans across the country.

This report examines how minimum-wage workers in thirty states¹⁵ have fared during the Bush Administration, and describes the benefits that a minimum wage increase would bring for workers in those states. Our findings leave no doubt that raising the minimum wage – making work pay again – is essential to make the American dream a reality for millions of hardworking families.

¹⁵ The thirty states examined are those states that have not raised their state minimum wage above the federal level of \$5.15 per hour.

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in Alabama

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in Alabama have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 157,000 workers and benefit 345,000 workers overall in Alabama.¹⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 38 percent of the median hourly wage in Alabama. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 55 percent of the state median wage.¹⁷

Poverty and Hunger

16.9 percent of Alabamians live in poverty, and 12.2 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.¹⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

¹⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

¹⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

¹⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in Alabama. A worker earning the minimum wage must work 79 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.¹⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.71 a gallon in Alabama, a minimum wage worker must spend 15.8 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.²⁰

Health Care

In Alabama, 28 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 69 percent of the total uninsured population of Alabama.²¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,290 a year, which represents 21 percent of their annual salary.²²

Child Care

A year of child care in Alabama costs an average of \$4,397 for an infant and \$4,114 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 41 percent and pre-school child care represents 38 percent of his or her annual salary.²³

¹⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

²⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgaugereport.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

²¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

²² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

²³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, Alabama experienced great economic growth. Approximately 100,500 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 4.4 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 4.2 percent over the next four years.²⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 22,600 jobs in Alabama after Congress last passed an increase.²⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of Alabamians out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

²⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

²⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in Arizona

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in Arizona have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 160,000 workers and benefit 382,000 workers overall in Arizona.²⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 37 percent of the median hourly wage in Arizona. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 52 percent of the state median wage.²⁷

Poverty and Hunger

14.4 percent of Arizonians live in poverty, and 12.7 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.²⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

²⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

²⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

²⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in Arizona. A worker earning the minimum wage must work 112 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.²⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.89 a gallon in Arizona, a minimum wage worker must spend 16.8 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.³⁰

Health Care

In Arizona, 34 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 68 percent of the total uninsured population of Arizona.³¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,697 a year, which represents 25 percent of their annual salary.³²

Child Care

A year of child care in Arizona costs an average of \$7,605 for an infant and \$5,928 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 71 percent and pre-school child care represents 55 percent of his or her annual salary.³³

²⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

³⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

³¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

³² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

³³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, Arizona experienced great economic growth. More than 348,000 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 5.8 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 4.5 percent over the next four years.³⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 63,300 jobs in Arizona after Congress last passed an increase.³⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of Arizonians out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

³⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

³⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in Colorado

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in Colorado have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 87,000 workers and benefit 251,000 workers overall in Colorado.³⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is only 33 percent of the median hourly wage in Colorado. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 45 percent of the state median wage.³⁷

Poverty and Hunger

Ten percent of Coloradans live in poverty, and 11.3 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.³⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

³⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

³⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

³⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in Colorado. A worker earning the minimum wage must work 124 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.³⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.82 a gallon in Colorado, a minimum wage worker must spend 16.5 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.⁴⁰

Health Care

In Colorado, 39 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 61 percent of the total uninsured population of Colorado.⁴¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,430 a year, which represents 23 percent of their annual salary.⁴²

Child Care

A year of child care in Colorado costs an average of \$7,459 for an infant and \$6,676 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 70 percent and pre-school child care represents 62 percent of his or her annual salary.⁴³

³⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

⁴⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

⁴¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

⁴² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

⁴³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, Colorado experienced great economic growth. Approximately 317,200 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 4.2 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 3.3 percent over the next four years.⁴⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 52,600 jobs in Colorado after Congress last passed an increase.⁴⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of Coloradans out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

⁴⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in Georgia

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in Georgia have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 213,000 workers and benefit 688,000 workers overall in Georgia.⁴⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 36 percent of the median hourly wage in Georgia. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 47 percent of the state median wage.⁴⁷

Poverty and Hunger

13.1 percent of Georgians live in poverty, and 12.3 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.⁴⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

⁴⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

⁴⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

⁴⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in Georgia. A worker earning the minimum wage must work 103 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.⁴⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.77 a gallon in Georgia, a minimum wage worker must spend 16.1 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.⁵⁰

Health Care

In Georgia, 33 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 63 percent of the total uninsured population of Georgia.⁵¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,327 a year, which represents 22 percent of their annual salary.⁵²

Child Care

A year of child care in Georgia costs an average of \$4,903 for an infant and \$4,137 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 46 percent and pre-school child care represents 39 percent of his or her annual salary.⁵³

⁴⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

⁵⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

⁵¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

⁵² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

⁵³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, Georgia experienced great economic growth. Approximately 432,000 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 4.6 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 4.0 percent over the next four years.⁵⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 62,200 jobs in Georgia after Congress last passed an increase.⁵⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of Georgians out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

⁵⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in Idaho

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in Idaho have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 48,000 workers and benefit 104,000 workers overall in Idaho.⁵⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 41 percent of the median hourly wage in Idaho. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 53 percent of the state median wage.⁵⁷

Poverty and Hunger

9.9 percent of Idahoans live in poverty, and 14.6 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.⁵⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

⁵⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

⁵⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

⁵⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in Idaho. A worker earning the minimum wage must work 90 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.⁵⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.90 a gallon in Idaho, a minimum wage worker must spend 16.9 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.⁶⁰

Health Care

In Idaho, 32 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 62 percent of the total uninsured population of Idaho.⁶¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,395 a year, which represents 22 percent of their annual salary.⁶²

Child Care

A year of child care in Idaho costs an average of \$7,774 for an infant and \$6,566 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 73 percent and pre-school child care represents 61 percent of his or her annual salary.⁶³

⁵⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

⁶⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

⁶¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

⁶² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

⁶³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, Idaho experienced great economic growth. Approximately 70,200 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 5.3 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 5 percent over the next four years.⁶⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 18,800 jobs in Idaho after Congress last passed an increase.⁶⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of Idahoans out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

⁶⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in Indiana

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in Indiana have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 145,000 workers and benefit 488,000 workers overall in Indiana.⁶⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 37 percent of the median hourly wage in Indiana. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 50 percent of the state median wage.⁶⁷

Poverty and Hunger

11.6 percent of Indianans live in poverty, and 10.1 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.⁶⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

⁶⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

⁶⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

⁶⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in Indiana. A worker earning the minimum wage must work 93 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.⁶⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.80 a gallon in Indiana, a minimum wage worker must spend 16.3 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.⁷⁰

Health Care

In Indiana, 30 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 60 percent of the total uninsured population of Indiana.⁷¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,301 a year, which represents 21 percent of their annual salary.⁷²

Child Care

A year of child care in Indiana costs an average of \$7,825 for an infant and \$6,018 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 73 percent and pre-school child care represents 56 percent of his or her annual salary.⁷³

⁶⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

⁷⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

⁷¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

⁷² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

⁷³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, Indiana experienced great economic growth. Approximately 170,500 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 3.8 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 3 percent over the next four years.⁷⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 35,100 jobs in Indiana after Congress last passed an increase.⁷⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of Indianans out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

⁷⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in Iowa

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in Iowa have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 129,000 workers and benefit 260,000 workers overall in Iowa.⁷⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 38 percent of the median hourly wage in Iowa. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 51 percent of the state median wage.⁷⁷

Poverty and Hunger

10.8 percent of Iowans live in poverty, and 10.2 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.⁷⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

⁷⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

⁷⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

⁷⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in Iowa. A worker earning the minimum wage must work 86 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.⁷⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.73 a gallon in Iowa, a minimum wage worker must spend 15.9 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.⁸⁰

Health Care

In Iowa, 28 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 66 percent of the total uninsured population of Iowa.⁸¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,188 a year, which represents 20 percent of their annual salary.⁸²

Child Care

A year of child care in Iowa costs an average of \$6,217 for an infant and \$5,612 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 58 percent and pre-school child care represents 52 percent of his or her annual salary.⁸³

⁷⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

⁸⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

⁸¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

⁸² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

⁸³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, Iowa experienced great economic growth. Approximately 96,000 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 3.6 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 2.9 percent over the next four years.⁸⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 16,100 jobs in Iowa after Congress last passed an increase.⁸⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of Iowans out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

⁸⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in Kansas

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in Kansas have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 131,000 workers and benefit 237,000 workers overall in Kansas.⁸⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 38 percent of the median hourly wage in Kansas. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 51 percent of the state median wage.⁸⁷

Poverty and Hunger

11.4 percent of Kansans live in poverty, and 12.3 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.⁸⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

⁸⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

⁸⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

⁸⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in Kansas. A worker earning the minimum wage must work 90 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.⁸⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.77 a gallon in Kansas, a minimum wage worker must spend 16.1 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.⁹⁰

Health Care

In Kansas, 27 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 70 percent of the total uninsured population of Kansas.⁹¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,566 a year, which represents 24 percent of their annual salary.⁹²

Child Care

A year of child care in Kansas costs an average of \$5,873 for an infant and \$4,446 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 55 percent and pre-school child care represents 42 percent of his or her annual salary.⁹³

⁸⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

⁹⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgaugereport.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

⁹¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

⁹² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

⁹³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, Kansas experienced great economic growth. Approximately 111,900 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 4.5 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 3.8 percent over the next four years.⁹⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 17,800 jobs in Kansas after Congress last passed an increase.⁹⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of Kansans out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

⁹⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in Kentucky

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in Kentucky have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 135,000 workers and benefit 329,000 workers overall in Kentucky.⁹⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 39 percent of the median hourly wage in Kentucky. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 52 percent of the state median wage.⁹⁷

Poverty and Hunger

17.7 percent of Kentuckians live in poverty, and 12.2 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.⁹⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

⁹⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

⁹⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

⁹⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in Kentucky. A worker earning the minimum wage must work 80 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.⁹⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.75 a gallon in Kentucky, a minimum wage worker must spend 16 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.¹⁰⁰

Health Care

In Kentucky, 29 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 70 percent of the total uninsured population of Kentucky.¹⁰¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,303 a year, which represents 21 percent of their annual salary.¹⁰²

Child Care

A year of child care in Kentucky costs an average of \$4,639 for an infant and \$3,960 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 43 percent and pre-school child care represents 37 percent of his or her annual salary.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

¹⁰⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

¹⁰¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

¹⁰³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, Kentucky experienced great economic growth. Approximately 147,600 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 5.4 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 4.8 percent over the next four years.¹⁰⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 25,400 jobs in Kentucky after Congress last passed an increase.¹⁰⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of Kentuckians out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

¹⁰⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in Louisiana

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in Louisiana have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 264,000 workers and benefit 353,000 workers overall in Louisiana.¹⁰⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 42 percent of the median hourly wage in Louisiana. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 55 percent of the state median wage.¹⁰⁷

Poverty and Hunger

16.7 percent of Louisianans live in poverty, and 11.8 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.¹⁰⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

¹⁰⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

¹⁰⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

¹⁰⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in Louisiana. A worker earning the minimum wage must work 88 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.¹⁰⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.73 a gallon in Louisiana, a minimum wage worker must spend 15.9 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.¹¹⁰

Health Care

In Louisiana, 35 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 72 percent of the total uninsured population of Louisiana.¹¹¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,587 a year, which represents 24 percent of their annual salary.¹¹²

Child Care

A year of child care in Louisiana costs an average of \$4,300 for an infant and \$3,900 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 40 percent and pre-school child care represents 36 percent of his or her annual salary.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

¹¹⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

¹¹¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

¹¹² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

¹¹³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, Louisiana experienced great economic growth. Approximately 100,300 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 6.3 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 5.2 percent over the next four years.¹¹⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 30,300 jobs in Louisiana after Congress last passed an increase.¹¹⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of Louisianans out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

¹¹⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in Mississippi

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in Mississippi have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 139,000 workers and benefit 200,000 workers overall in Mississippi.¹¹⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 43 percent of the median hourly wage in Mississippi. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 58 percent of the state median wage.¹¹⁷

Poverty and Hunger

18.6 percent of Mississippians live in poverty, and 15.8 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.¹¹⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in Mississippi. A worker earning the minimum

¹¹⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

¹¹⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

¹¹⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

wage must work 79 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.¹¹⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.71 a gallon in Mississippi, a minimum wage worker must spend 15.8 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.¹²⁰

Health Care

In Mississippi, 30 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 68 percent of the total uninsured population of Mississippi.¹²¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,328 a year, which represents 22 percent of their annual salary.¹²²

Child Care

A year of child care in Mississippi costs an average of \$4,368 for an infant and \$4,004 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 41 percent and pre-school child care represents 37 percent of his or her annual salary.¹²³

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, Mississippi experienced great economic growth.

¹¹⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

¹²⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

¹²¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

¹²² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

¹²³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

Approximately 55,900 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 5.8 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 5.6 percent over the next four years.¹²⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 24,700 jobs in Mississippi after Congress last passed an increase.¹²⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of Mississippians out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

¹²⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in Missouri

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in Missouri have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 180,000 workers and benefit 465,000 workers overall in Missouri.¹²⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 37 percent of the median hourly wage in Missouri. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 48 percent of the state median wage.¹²⁷

Poverty and Hunger

12.2 percent of Missourians live in poverty, and 11.3 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.¹²⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

Housing

¹²⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

¹²⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

¹²⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in Missouri. A worker earning the minimum wage must work 91 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.¹²⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.69 a gallon in Missouri, a minimum wage worker must spend 15.7 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.¹³⁰

Health Care

In Missouri, 27 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 63 percent of the total uninsured population of Missouri.¹³¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,286 a year, which represents 21 percent of their annual salary.¹³²

Child Care

A year of child care in Missouri costs an average of \$5,907 for an infant and \$4,415 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 55 percent and pre-school child care represents 41 percent of his or her annual salary.¹³³

No Negative Effect on Employment

¹²⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

¹³⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

¹³¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

¹³² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

¹³³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, Missouri experienced great economic growth. Approximately 176,400 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 4.7 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 3.7 percent over the next four years.¹³⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 34,100 jobs in Missouri after Congress last passed an increase.¹³⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of Missourians out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

¹³⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in Montana

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in Montana have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 34,000 workers and benefit 69,000 workers overall in Montana.¹³⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 43 percent of the median hourly wage in Montana. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 57 percent of the state median wage.¹³⁷

Poverty and Hunger

14.1 percent of Montanans live in poverty, and 12.2 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.¹³⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

¹³⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

¹³⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

¹³⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in Montana. A worker earning the minimum wage must work 85 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.¹³⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.82 a gallon in Montana, a minimum wage worker must spend 16.4 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.¹⁴⁰

Health Care

In Montana, 35 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 65 percent of the total uninsured population of Montana.¹⁴¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,388 a year, which represents 22 percent of their annual salary.¹⁴²

Child Care

A year of child care in Montana costs an average of \$6,500 for an infant and \$5,720 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 61 percent and pre-school child care represents 53 percent of his or her annual salary.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

¹⁴⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

¹⁴¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

¹⁴² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

¹⁴³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, Montana experienced great economic growth. Approximately 26,600 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 5.5 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 5.3 percent over the next four years.¹⁴⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 5,300 jobs in Montana after Congress last passed an increase.¹⁴⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of Montanans out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

¹⁴⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in Nebraska

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in Nebraska have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 61,000 workers and benefit 145,000 workers overall in Nebraska.¹⁴⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 40 percent of the median hourly wage in Nebraska. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 54 percent of the state median wage.¹⁴⁷

Poverty and Hunger

9.4 percent of Nebraskans live in poverty, and 10.7 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.¹⁴⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

¹⁴⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

¹⁴⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

¹⁴⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in Nebraska. A worker earning the minimum wage must work 88 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.¹⁴⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.81 a gallon in Nebraska, a minimum wage worker must spend 16.4 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.¹⁵⁰

Health Care

In Nebraska, 30 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 67 percent of the total uninsured population of Nebraska.¹⁵¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,646 a year, which represents 25 percent of their annual salary.¹⁵²

Child Care

A year of child care in Nebraska costs an average of \$5,400 for an infant and \$5,100 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 50 percent and pre-school child care represents 48 percent of his or her annual salary.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

¹⁵⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

¹⁵¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

¹⁵² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

¹⁵³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, Nebraska experienced great economic growth. Approximately 78,400 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 2.7 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 2.6 percent over the next four years.¹⁵⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 12,300 jobs in Nebraska after Congress last passed an increase.¹⁵⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of Nebraskans out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

¹⁵⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in Nevada

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in Nevada have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 57,000 workers and benefit 144,000 workers overall in Nevada.¹⁵⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 37 percent of the median hourly wage in Nevada. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 49 percent of the state median wage.¹⁵⁷

Poverty and Hunger

10.9 percent of Nevadans live in poverty, and 8.5 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.¹⁵⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

¹⁵⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

¹⁵⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

¹⁵⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in Nevada. A worker earning the minimum wage must work 127 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.¹⁵⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$3.00 a gallon in Nevada, a minimum wage worker must spend 17.5 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.¹⁶⁰

Health Care

In Nevada, 39 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 64 percent of the total uninsured population of Nevada.¹⁶¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,100 a year, which represents 20 percent of their annual salary.¹⁶²

Child Care

A year of child care in Nevada costs an average of \$8,060 for an infant and \$5,980 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 75 percent and pre-school child care represents 56 percent of his or her annual salary.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

¹⁶⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

¹⁶¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

¹⁶³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, Nevada experienced great economic growth. Approximately 182,300 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 5.1 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 4.4 percent over the next four years.¹⁶⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 76,400 jobs in Nevada after Congress last passed an increase.¹⁶⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of Nevadans out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

¹⁶⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in New Hampshire

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in New Hampshire have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 17,000 workers and benefit 21,000 workers overall in New Hampshire.¹⁶⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 32 percent of the median hourly wage in New Hampshire. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 45 percent of the state median wage.¹⁶⁷

Poverty and Hunger

5.4 percent of New Hampshirites live in poverty, and 6.4 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.¹⁶⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in New Hampshire. A worker earning the

¹⁶⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

¹⁶⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

¹⁶⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

minimum wage must work 137 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.¹⁶⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.87 a gallon in New Hampshire, a minimum wage worker must spend 16.7 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.¹⁷⁰

Health Care

In New Hampshire, 32 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 52 percent of the total uninsured population of New Hampshire.¹⁷¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,435 a year, which represents 23 percent of their annual salary.¹⁷²

Child Care

A year of child care in New Hampshire costs an average of \$7,100 for an infant and \$5,800 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 66 percent and pre-school child care represents 54 percent of his or her annual salary.¹⁷³

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, New Hampshire experienced great economic growth.

¹⁶⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

¹⁷⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

¹⁷¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

¹⁷² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

¹⁷³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

Approximately 67,900 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 3.7 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 2.9 percent over the next four years.¹⁷⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 17,100 jobs in New Hampshire after Congress last passed an increase.¹⁷⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of New Hampshireers out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

¹⁷⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in New Mexico

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in New Mexico have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 71,000 workers and benefit 146,000 workers overall in New Mexico.¹⁷⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 39 percent of the median hourly wage in New Mexico. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 53 percent of the state median wage.¹⁷⁷

Poverty and Hunger

16.5 percent of New Mexicans live in poverty, and 15.8 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.¹⁷⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

¹⁷⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

¹⁷⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

¹⁷⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in New Mexico. A worker earning the minimum wage must work 93 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.¹⁷⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.93 a gallon in New Mexico, a minimum wage worker must spend 17.1 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.¹⁸⁰

Health Care

In New Mexico, 37 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 70 percent of the total uninsured population of New Mexico.¹⁸¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,506 a year, which represents 23 percent of their annual salary.¹⁸²

Child Care

A year of child care in New Mexico costs an average of \$5,714 for an infant and \$5,086 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 53 percent and pre-school child care represents 47 percent of his or her annual salary.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

¹⁸⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

¹⁸¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

¹⁸² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

¹⁸³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, New Mexico experienced great economic growth. Approximately 53,800 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 7.5 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 6 percent over the next four years.¹⁸⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 8,600 jobs in New Mexico after Congress last passed an increase.¹⁸⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of New Mexicans out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

¹⁸⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in North Carolina

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in North Carolina have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 275,000 workers and benefit 656,000 workers overall in North Carolina.¹⁸⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 40 percent of the median hourly wage in North Carolina. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 51 percent of the state median wage.¹⁸⁷

Poverty and Hunger

14.6 percent of North Carolinians live in poverty, and 13.8 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.¹⁸⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in North Carolina. A worker earning the

¹⁸⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

¹⁸⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

¹⁸⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

minimum wage must work 94 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.¹⁸⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.76 a gallon in North Carolina, a minimum wage worker must spend 16 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.¹⁹⁰

Health Care

In North Carolina, 34 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 70 percent of the total uninsured population of North Carolina.¹⁹¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,359 a year, which represents 22 percent of their annual salary.¹⁹²

Child Care

A year of child care in North Carolina costs an average of \$6,916 for an infant and \$5,876 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 65 percent and pre-school child care represents 55 percent of his or her annual salary.¹⁹³

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, North Carolina experienced great economic growth.

¹⁸⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

¹⁹⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

¹⁹¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

¹⁹³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

Approximately 385,400 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 4.4 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 3.6 percent over the next four years.¹⁹⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 76,200 jobs in North Carolina after Congress last passed an increase.¹⁹⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of North Carolinians out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

¹⁹⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in North Dakota

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in North Dakota have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 22,000 workers and benefit 49,000 workers overall in North Dakota.¹⁹⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 41 percent of the median hourly wage in North Dakota. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 58 percent of the state median wage.¹⁹⁷

Poverty and Hunger

9.7 percent of North Dakotans live in poverty, and 6.3 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.¹⁹⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in North Dakota. A worker earning the minimum

¹⁹⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

¹⁹⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

¹⁹⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

wage must work 78 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.¹⁹⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.83 a gallon in North Dakota, a minimum wage worker must spend 16.5 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.²⁰⁰

Health Care

In North Dakota, 24 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 57 percent of the total uninsured population of North Dakota.²⁰¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,136 a year, which represents 20 percent of their annual salary.²⁰²

Child Care

A year of child care in North Dakota costs an average of \$6,020 for an infant and \$5,308 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 56 percent and pre-school child care represents 50 percent of his or her annual salary.²⁰³

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, North Dakota experienced great economic growth.

¹⁹⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

²⁰⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

²⁰¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

²⁰² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

²⁰³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

Approximately 18,100 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 3.2 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 3.0 percent over the next four years.²⁰⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 1,200 jobs in North Dakota after Congress last passed an increase.²⁰⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of North Dakotans out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

²⁰⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in Ohio

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in Ohio have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 339,000 workers and benefit 928,000 workers overall in Ohio.²⁰⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 37 percent of the median hourly wage in Ohio. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 47 percent of the state median wage.²⁰⁷

Poverty and Hunger

11.6 percent of Ohioans live in poverty, and 11.4 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.²⁰⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

²⁰⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

²⁰⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

²⁰⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in Ohio. A worker earning the minimum wage must work 94 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment in Ohio.²⁰⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.77 a gallon in Ohio, a minimum wage worker must spend 16.1 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.²¹⁰

Health Care

In Ohio, 28 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 66 percent of the total uninsured population of Ohio.²¹¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$1,946 a year, which represents 18 percent of their annual salary.²¹²

Child Care

A year of child care in Ohio costs an average of \$6,283 for an infant and \$5,167 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 59 percent and pre-school child care represents 48 percent of his or her annual salary.²¹³

²⁰⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

²¹⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

²¹¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

²¹² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

²¹³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, Ohio experienced great economic growth. Approximately 315,300 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 5 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 4.4 percent over the next four years.²¹⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 45,800 jobs in Ohio after Congress last passed an increase.²¹⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of Ohioans out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

²¹⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in Oklahoma

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in Oklahoma have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 124,000 workers and benefit 246,000 workers overall in Oklahoma.²¹⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 42 percent of the median hourly wage in Oklahoma. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 56 percent of the state median wage.²¹⁷

Poverty and Hunger

10.8 percent of Oklahomans live in poverty, and 15.2 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.²¹⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

²¹⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

²¹⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

²¹⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in Oklahoma. A worker earning the minimum wage must work 82 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.²¹⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.68 a gallon in Oklahoma, a minimum wage worker must spend 15.6 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.²²⁰

Health Care

In Oklahoma, 38 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 62 percent of the total uninsured population of Oklahoma.²²¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,426 a year, which represents 23 percent of their annual salary.²²²

Child Care

A year of child care in Oklahoma costs an average of \$6,029 for an infant and \$4,706 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 56 percent and pre-school child care represents 44 percent of his or her annual salary.²²³

²¹⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

²²⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

²²¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

²²² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

²²³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, Oklahoma experienced great economic growth. Approximately 138,000 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 4.1 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 3.9 percent over the next four years.²²⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 28,200 jobs in Oklahoma after Congress last passed an increase.²²⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of Oklahomans out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

²²⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in Pennsylvania

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in Pennsylvania have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 329,000 workers and benefit 808,000 workers overall in Pennsylvania.²²⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 36 percent of the median hourly wage in Pennsylvania. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 46 percent of the state median wage.²²⁷

Poverty and Hunger

11.3 percent of Pennsylvanians live in poverty, and 10.2 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.²²⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in Pennsylvania. A worker earning the minimum

²²⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

²²⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

²²⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

wage must work 111 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.²²⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.81 a gallon in Pennsylvania, a minimum wage worker must spend 16.4 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.²³⁰

Health Care

In Pennsylvania, 28 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 64 percent of the total uninsured population of Pennsylvania.²³¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,055 a year, which represents 19 percent of their annual salary.²³²

Child Care

A year of child care in Pennsylvania costs an average of \$11,450 for an infant and \$6,700 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 107 percent and pre-school child care represents 63 percent of his or her annual salary.²³³

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, Pennsylvania experienced great economic growth.

²²⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

²³⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgaugereport.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

²³¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

²³² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

²³³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

Approximately 390,300 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 5.3 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 4.6 percent over the next four years.²³⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 84,300 jobs in Pennsylvania after Congress last passed an increase.²³⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of Pennsylvanians out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

²³⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in South Carolina

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in South Carolina have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 179,000 workers and benefit 325,000 workers overall in South Carolina.²³⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 41 percent of the median hourly wage in South Carolina. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 52 percent of the state median wage.²³⁷

Poverty and Hunger

14.9 percent of South Carolinians live in poverty, and 14.8 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.²³⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in South Carolina. A worker earning the minimum

²³⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

²³⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

²³⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

wage must work 88 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.²³⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.63 a gallon in South Carolina, a minimum wage worker must spend 15.3 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.²⁴⁰

Health Care

In South Carolina, 29 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 65 percent of the total uninsured population of South Carolina.²⁴¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,596 a year, which represents 24 percent of their annual salary.²⁴²

Child Care

A year of child care in South Carolina costs an average of \$4,712 for an infant and \$4,180 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 44 percent and pre-school child care represents 39 percent of his or her annual salary.²⁴³

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, South Carolina experienced great economic growth.

²³⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

²⁴⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

²⁴¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

²⁴² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

²⁴³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

Approximately 159,900 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 5.8 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 4.1 percent over the next four years.²⁴⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 32,700 jobs in South Carolina after Congress last passed an increase.²⁴⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of South Carolinians out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

²⁴⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in South Dakota

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in South Dakota have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 33,000 workers and benefit 64,000 workers overall in South Dakota.²⁴⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 42 percent of the median hourly wage in South Dakota. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 58 percent of the state median wage.²⁴⁷

Poverty and Hunger

13.4 percent of South Dakotans live in poverty, and 9.2 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.²⁴⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in South Dakota. A worker earning the minimum

²⁴⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

²⁴⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

²⁴⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

wage must work 82 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.²⁴⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.83 a gallon in South Dakota, a minimum wage worker must spend 16.5 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.²⁵⁰

Health Care

In South Dakota, 26 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 61 percent of the total uninsured population of South Dakota.²⁵¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,326 a year, which represents 22 percent of their annual salary.²⁵²

Child Care

A year of child care in South Dakota costs an average of \$4,680 for an infant and \$4,446 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 44 percent and pre-school child care represents 42 percent of his or her annual salary.²⁵³

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, South Dakota experienced great economic growth.

²⁴⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

²⁵⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

²⁵¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

²⁵² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

²⁵³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

Approximately 27,600 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 3.4 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 2.9 percent over the next four years.²⁵⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 4,200 jobs in South Dakota after Congress last passed an increase.²⁵⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of South Dakotans out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

²⁵⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in Tennessee

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in Tennessee have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 153,000 workers and benefit 447,000 workers overall in Tennessee.²⁵⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 41 percent of the median hourly wage in Tennessee. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 52 percent of the state median wage.²⁵⁷

Poverty and Hunger

15.9 percent of Tennesseans live in poverty, and 11.5 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.²⁵⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in Tennessee. A worker earning the minimum

²⁵⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

²⁵⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

²⁵⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

wage must work 87 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.²⁵⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.68 a gallon in Tennessee, a minimum wage worker must spend 15.6 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.²⁶⁰

Health Care

In Tennessee, 26 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 63 percent of the total uninsured population of Tennessee.²⁶¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,569 a year, which represents 24 percent of their annual salary.²⁶²

Child Care

A year of child care in Tennessee costs an average of \$5,680 for an infant and \$5,355 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 53 percent and pre-school child care represents 50 percent of his or her annual salary.²⁶³

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, Tennessee experienced great economic growth.

²⁵⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

²⁶⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

²⁶¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

²⁶² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

²⁶³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

Approximately 195,500 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 5.4 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 4.6 percent over the next four years.²⁶⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 35,900 jobs in Tennessee after Congress last passed an increase.²⁶⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of Tennesseans out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

²⁶⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in Texas

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in Texas have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 888,000 workers and benefit 1,774,000 workers overall in Texas.²⁶⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 41 percent of the median hourly wage in Texas. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 52 percent of the state median wage.²⁶⁷

Poverty and Hunger

16.5 percent of Texans live in poverty, and 16.4 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.²⁶⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

²⁶⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

²⁶⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

²⁶⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in Texas. A worker earning the minimum wage must work 103 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.²⁶⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.78 a gallon in Texas, a minimum wage worker must spend 16.2 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.²⁷⁰

Health Care

In Texas, 44 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 69 percent of the total uninsured population of Texas.²⁷¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,568 a year, which represents 24 percent of their annual salary.²⁷²

Child Care

A year of child care in Texas costs an average of \$5,613 for an infant and \$4,709 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 52 percent and pre-school child care represents 44 percent of his or her annual salary.²⁷³

²⁶⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

²⁷⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

²⁷¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

²⁷² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

²⁷³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, Texas experienced great economic growth. Approximately 1,193,800 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 5.7 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 4.9 percent over the next four years.²⁷⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 213,000 jobs in Texas after Congress last passed an increase.²⁷⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of Texans out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

²⁷⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in Utah

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in Utah have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 81,000 workers and benefit 180,000 workers overall in Utah.²⁷⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 40 percent of the median hourly wage in Utah. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 51 percent of the state median wage.²⁷⁷

Poverty and Hunger

9.9 percent of Utahns live in poverty, and 14.8 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.²⁷⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

²⁷⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

²⁷⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

²⁷⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in Utah. A worker earning the minimum wage must work 101 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.²⁷⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.89 a gallon in Utah, a minimum wage worker must spend 16.8 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.²⁸⁰

Health Care

In Utah, 27 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 64 percent of the total uninsured population of Utah.²⁸¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,309 a year, which represents 22 percent of their annual salary.²⁸²

Child Care

A year of child care in Utah costs an average of \$5,601 for an infant and \$4,421 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 52 percent and pre-school child care represents 41 percent of his or her annual salary.²⁸³

²⁷⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

²⁸⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

²⁸¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

²⁸² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

²⁸³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, Utah experienced great economic growth. Approximately 117,300 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 3.6 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 3.4 percent over the next four years.²⁸⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 20,900 jobs in Utah after Congress last passed an increase.²⁸⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of Utahns out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

²⁸⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in Virginia

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in Virginia have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 178,000 workers and benefit 462,000 workers overall in Virginia.²⁸⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 34 percent of the median hourly wage in Virginia. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 46 percent of the state median wage.²⁸⁷

Poverty and Hunger

9.3 percent of Virginians live in poverty, and 8.5 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.²⁸⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

²⁸⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

²⁸⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

²⁸⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in Virginia. A worker earning the minimum wage must work 127 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.²⁸⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.79 a gallon in Virginia, a minimum wage worker must spend 16.3 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.²⁹⁰

Health Care

In Virginia, 33 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 60 percent of the total uninsured population of Virginia.²⁹¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$2,728 a year, which represents 25 percent of their annual salary.²⁹²

Child Care

A year of child care in Virginia costs an average of \$8,268 for an infant and \$6,240 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 77 percent and pre-school child care represents 58 percent of his or her annual salary.²⁹³

²⁸⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

²⁹⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

²⁹¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

²⁹³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, Virginia experienced great economic growth. Approximately 380,100 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 4.3 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 3.0 percent over the next four years.²⁹⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 59,200 jobs in Virginia after Congress last passed an increase.²⁹⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of Virginians out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

²⁹⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in West Virginia

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in West Virginia have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 67,000 workers and benefit 134,000 workers overall in West Virginia.²⁹⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 41 percent of the median hourly wage in West Virginia. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 52 percent of the state median wage.²⁹⁷

Poverty and Hunger

14.2 percent of West Virginians live in poverty, and 8.8 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.²⁹⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in West Virginia. A worker earning the minimum

²⁹⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

²⁹⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

²⁹⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

wage must work 76 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.²⁹⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.82 a gallon in West Virginia, a minimum wage worker must spend 16.4 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.³⁰⁰

Health Care

In West Virginia, 31 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 68 percent of the total uninsured population of West Virginia.³⁰¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$1,554 a year, which represents 15 percent of their annual salary.³⁰²

Child Care

A year of child care in West Virginia costs an average of \$7,613 for an infant and \$7,176 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 71 percent and pre-school child care represents 67 percent of his or her annual salary.³⁰³

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, West Virginia experienced great economic growth.

²⁹⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

³⁰⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

³⁰¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

³⁰² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

³⁰³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

Approximately 34,200 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 7.2 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 6.4 percent over the next four years.³⁰⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 5,400 jobs in West Virginia after Congress last passed an increase.³⁰⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of West Virginians out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

³⁰⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

WORKING HARD, BUT LOSING GROUND: Minimum Wage Families in Wyoming

The State Minimum Wage

In the five and a half years since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has remained \$5.15 an hour and minimum wage workers in Wyoming have been falling farther behind. Raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour would directly raise the pay of 17,000 workers and benefit 41,000 workers overall in Wyoming.³⁰⁶

Minimum Wage Workers Falling Behind

The minimum wage has lost value every year since it was last increased. The minimum wage is now only 39 percent of the median hourly wage in Wyoming. When the minimum wage was last increased in 1997, it was 52 percent of the state median wage.³⁰⁷

Poverty and Hunger

9.9 percent of Wyomingites live in poverty, and 11 percent are hungry or at risk of hunger.³⁰⁸ A low minimum wage is a key part of this problem.

³⁰⁶ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey (performed June 2006).

³⁰⁷ Economic Policy Institute analysis of 1997, 2005 Current Population Survey median wage data (performed June 2006).

³⁰⁸ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2004."

Housing

Minimum wage workers do not earn enough to pay for adequate housing in Wyoming. A worker earning the minimum wage must work 83 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom apartment.³⁰⁹

Transportation

With gas prices now \$2.78 a gallon in Wyoming, a minimum wage worker must spend 16.2 percent of his or her weekly salary just to fill a tank with gas.³¹⁰

Health Care

In Wyoming, 29 percent of low-income workers lack health insurance. That totals 52 percent of the total uninsured population of Wyoming.³¹¹ Even for those minimum wage workers lucky enough to receive health care from their job, their own required contribution averages \$1,941 a year, which represents 18 percent of their annual salary.³¹²

Child Care

A year of child care in Wyoming costs an average of \$6,552 for an infant and \$5,486 for a pre-schooler. For a minimum wage worker, infant child care represents 61 percent and pre-school child care represents 51 percent of his or her annual salary.³¹³

³⁰⁹ National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2005." Rent and utilities are calculated as "Fair Market Rent," which is defined as gross rent and utility (except telephone) costs at the 40th percentile by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

³¹⁰ American Automobile Association, Daily Fuel Gauge Report, *available at* <http://www.fuelgauge.com/sbsavg.asp> (accessed June 27, 2006). Percentage of weekly salary is calculated using a 40-hour workweek at \$5.15 an hour and a 12-gallon tank.

³¹¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, "Nonelderly Uninsured by Federal Poverty Level, 2003-2004," *available at* <http://www.statehealthfacts.kff.org>. "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty line.

³¹² *Ibid*, "Average Annual Cost of Employment-Based Health Insurance for Family Coverage, 2003."

³¹³ National Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, "Price of Child Care, 2004-2005," *available at* <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/program.php?Page=1> (accessed June 2006).

No Negative Effect on Employment

In the four years after the 1996 federal minimum wage increase, Wyoming experienced great economic growth. Approximately 16,500 new jobs were created. Unemployment dropped from 5.2 percent in the month before Congress raised the minimum wage in 1996, to an average of 4.7 percent over the next four years.³¹⁴

Industries that employ large numbers of minimum wage workers grew as well. The retail and leisure-and-hospitality industries—which together employ slightly more than half of minimum wage workers—added 2,500 jobs in Wyoming after Congress last passed an increase.³¹⁵

An increase of \$2.10 in the federal minimum wage is modest and would not reduce employment. But it would help lift tens of thousands of Wyomingites out of poverty and toward safer, more secure, and more productive lives.

³¹⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data, *available at* <http://www.bls.gov> (accessed June 2006).

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*

