



Repost our talking points on your social media:



Minimum Wage: Why it Matters Right Now

Background

Under normal economic circumstances, measures like minimum wage help protect vulnerable low-income workers. The fight for an increased minimum wage has been a battleground between Dems and the GOP in the MI legislature. In 2018, the GOP blocked a citizen-led minimum wage ballot initiative from appearing on the midterm election ballot, thus taking away citizens' ability to make their own decisions. With the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic, protections such as minimum wage and paid leave are even more vital. Since mid-March, more than 2 million people—around 40% of Michigan's eligible workforce—have filed for unemployment benefits.

Core Message

The majority of people in MI support increasing the minimum wage. Flipping the MI State House this November 3rd will allow Dems to secure an increase in the minimum wage for MI workers. As long as the Republican-led Legislature holds the majority in the MI State House, minimum wage bills and citizen-led ballot initiatives will be routinely blocked or gutted. While the GOP is focused on preventing increases to the minimum wage, Dems have introduced legislation to strengthen unemployment benefits, create a commission on pay equity, and increase transparency relative to wage rates and potential gender-based wage gaps. Each of these pro-worker measures has been stalled by Republican leadership, further solidifying economic inequality in MI.

TALKING POINTS

- The minimum wage in MI is \$9.65.
- MI has the highest rate (50%) of black children living in poverty in the US.
- A minimum subsistence wage for a MI family of four with two working parents is \$15.96 per hour.
- A minimum subsistence wage provides only a marginal standard of living, perpetuates housing and food insecurity, and does not allow for savings or planning for the future.
- A low minimum wage is the primary factor driving economic inequality.
- Dems supported increasing the minimum wage to \$12.00 in 2022. The GOP successfully delayed the increase to \$12.05 until 2030.

Key Arguments

A minimum subsistence wage for a Michigan family of four with two working parents is \$15.96 per hour. If only one parent is working, that parent would have to earn \$24.83 per hour. However, the current minimum wage in Michigan is just \$9.65 per hour and is only scheduled to reach \$12.05 by 2030.



Before the Covid-19 pandemic, 16% of Michiganders lived in poverty. Two counties had poverty rates above 22% (Isabella County 23.4%; Lake County 22.3%). Now, with little to no financial cushion, these families bear the brunt of the COVID-19 related economic crisis. Many low-income workers have lost their jobs, while many others must work despite the health risks. Without any financial buffers, these workers are struggling to pay for rent, food, and other necessities during this pandemic. Ensuring that all workers are paid a living wage has never been more vital.

One in four (23%) of MI children live in poverty. Poverty weakens families and increases health risks, driving up social and medical costs for everyone. Poverty traps individuals in their current circumstances and decreases upward mobility. The effects of poverty are particularly damaging for children. Children who live in families below the poverty line are at greater risk of lower educational attainment, continued reliance on public benefits and incarceration—all of which limit the growth and prosperity of Michigan.

See complete report: [Minimum Wage in MI](#)