

Latinos and the Minimum Wage

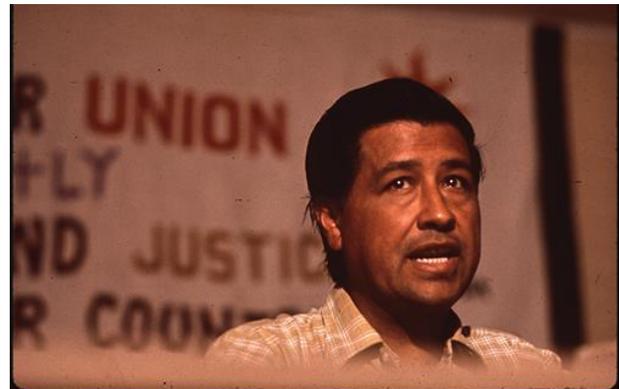
Raising the federal minimum wage is a critical civil rights issue and will make a significant difference in the lives of millions of low-wage workers and their families. Latinos have disproportionately high rates of poverty, so increasing wages would be greatly beneficial both for this population and for the entire nation's economic recovery.

Latinos are disproportionately represented among the 30 million Americans who will benefit from a higher minimum wage.

- Latinos represent only 15 percent of the workforce, yet comprise 25 percent of those that would benefit from a higher minimum wage.¹
- An increase in the minimum wage to \$10.10 would either directly or indirectly raise the wages of 3.3 million Latina workers.²
- A higher minimum wage would help close the gender wage gap. In 2012, women working full time, year-round were typically paid 77 cents for every dollar paid to their male counterparts, and this gap was even wider for women of color: Latinas typically made 54 cents for every dollar paid to their White, non-Hispanic male counterparts.³
- The racial and ethnic composition of workers affected by increasing the minimum wage to \$10.10 varies considerably by state, and in some cases Latinos comprise a majority: the Latino composition ranges from 0.9 percent in West Virginia to 58.6 percent in California.⁴
- A raise in the minimum wage for tipped workers could make a huge difference. The majority (61.2 percent) of tipped workers are waiters and waitresses, and Latinos represent almost 20 percent of waiters and waitresses nationwide (compared to just 15 percent of workers in all occupations).⁵

The Minimum Wage Fairness Act⁶ would:

- raise the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$10.10 by 2016, in three increments of 95 cents each;
- adjust the minimum wage each year to keep pace with the rising cost of living;
- and raise the minimum wage for tipped workers, which has been frozen at a meager \$2.13 per hour for more than 20 years.



“When the man who feeds the world by toiling in the fields is himself deprived of the basic rights of feeding, sheltering, and caring for his own family, the whole community of man is sick.”

- Cesar Chavez

A \$10.10 minimum wage would mean higher earnings for 17 million workers⁷ with little to no effect on employment,⁸ and could lift nearly five million Americans out of poverty.⁹

The Leadership Conference Education Fund builds public will for federal policies that promote and protect the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States. The Education Fund's campaigns empower and mobilize advocates around the country to push for progressive change in the United States.

The mission of the League of United Latin American Citizens is to advance the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, housing, health and civil rights of the Hispanic population of the United States.

¹<http://www.epi.org/blog/10-10-minimum-wage-give-economy-wage-workers/>.

²Economic Policy Institute analysis of Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Group microdata.

³http://www.nwlc.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/green_minimumwageandwagegapfebruary_2014_update.pdf.

⁴<http://s2.epi.org/files/2013/IB354-Minimum-wage.pdf>.

⁵<http://www.nclr.org/images/uploads/publications/EmpReportJan2014.pdf>.

⁶<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c113:S.1737.>

⁷http://www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view&id=4075#_ftn10.

⁸<http://www.cepr.net/documents/publications/min-wage-2013-02.pdf>.

⁹https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/15038936/Dube_MinimumWagesFamilyIncomes.pdf.