

Immediate Release

August 14, 2012

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Increasing the Federal Minimum Wage Would Give More Than 180,000 West Virginia Workers a Raise

[Charleston, WV] – If the federal government increased the minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$9.80 per hour it would give an estimated 182,000 workers in West Virginia a raise while also generating approximately 800 new jobs over three years, \$300 million in additional wages, and \$200 million in state economic activity. This according to a new report released today by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI).

In *How raising the federal minimum wage would help working families and give the economy a boost*, EPI researchers Doug Hall and David Cooper find that this increase in the federal minimum wage would give more than 28 million workers a raise while generating 100,000 new jobs over three years and boosting wages by almost \$40 billion.

““With the national unemployment rate not budging below 8.0 percent, now is the perfect time to raise the minimum wage,” said Hall. “Not only will it generate billions of new dollars for the economy while adding new jobs when we sorely need them, it will begin to address the wage stagnation working families have faced during the last four decades, while putting more money in their hands when they need it most.”

The report also shows that raising the minimum wage would benefit millions of workers across demographic groups, not just teenage part-time workers. Almost 88 percent of workers who would be affected are at least 20 years old. In West Virginia, 90 percent of workers affected by raising the minimum wage would be over 20 years old and less than 12 percent of workers in West Virginia affected would be part-time workers.

Female and non-minority workers would benefit disproportionately from the increase; women comprise nearly 55 percent of those affected, and non-Hispanic white workers make up about 56 percent. In West Virginia, almost one-third (124,328) of children would be affected by raising the minimum wage.

“Far too many working families in West Virginia struggle to afford basic necessities like child care, rent, and food. If anyone deserves a raise, it’s the working poor,” said Ted Boettner, Executive Director of the West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy. “Over the last thirty years, low-income workers have seen the price of goods and services rise while their wages have stagnated or declined. For example, a typical low-income worker made about 63 cents more in 1979 than he or she did in 2011. “

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EPI’s full report can be found at: <http://www.epi.org/publication/ib341-raising-federal-minimum-wage/>

State level-data: <http://bit.ly/PanNZF>

The West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy (www.wvpolicy.org) is a public policy research organization that is nonpartisan, nonprofit, and statewide. The Center focuses on how policy decisions affect all West Virginians, especially low- and moderate-income families.