



HB 353 Summary: This bill would gradually increase the state minimum wage — currently \$7.25 per hour — to \$18 per hour by 2030 and then adjust it based on inflation.

The current minimum wage is a poverty wage

- North Carolina's minimum wage has remained at \$7.25 per hour since 2009. If the state minimum wage had kept up with inflation, it would be nearly \$11 today.
- At \$7.25 per hour, full-time work leaves many families under the federal poverty level. A family of two parents and two kids would earn \$30,160 annually if both adults worked full-time at minimum wage, while the federal poverty level for that family is slightly higher at \$31,200.¹

The current minimum wage falls far short of a living wage

According to the Living Income Standard for North Carolina, each adult in a family of two parents and two kids would need to work full-time and earn at least \$23.40 per hour to afford the basics. Even in the lowest-cost county, each adult would need to earn \$18.50 per hour — more than double the current minimum wage.²

When states increase their minimum wage, workers are better off

Thirty states have set a minimum wage higher than \$7.25 and are seeing household incomes rise.³ For example, Virginia's minimum wage increased to \$12.41 in 2025, and 6.4% of the state's workforce is expected to be impacted with an average annual income increase of \$421.⁴

More about HB 353

- Increases the state minimum wage to \$10/hour by 2026, \$12/hour by 2027, \$14/hour by 2028, \$16/hour by 2029, \$18/hour by 2030, and indexes the minimum wage to inflation thereafter.
- Employers who violate minimum wage laws would owe impacted employees lost wages and benefits plus interest and reasonable attorneys' fees and costs.
- 9 attorneys' fees and costs

¹ ncbudget.org/2025-living-income-standard-provides-a-look-at-the-cost-of-meeting-the-basics-across-north-carolina/

² <https://ncbudget.org/2025-living-income-standard/>

³ <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/mw-consolidated#4>

⁴ www.epi.org/blog/over-9-2-million-workers-will-get-a-raise-on-january-1-from-21-states-raising-their-minimum-wages/