

ISSUE BRIEF

Raising Missouri's Minimum Wage

helps women and their families

Today, someone working full-time at minimum wage **earns \$314 a week** (about \$16,000 per year). **Six in 10 minimum wage workers are women**, many of whom are raising families. With the average annual cost of childcare a \$5,000-\$8000/child¹, it is difficult for many working families to make ends meet.

Background

Women and girls in the St. Louis region face complex and interrelated barriers on their path to achieving economic independence.

Based on themes that emerged from a series of listening sessions the Women's Foundation of Greater St. Louis (WFSTL) conducted in spring 2017, our Women in the Workplace: Employment Scorecard initiative and a report completed by graduate students at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis in spring 2018, WFSTL recently adopted a policy agenda for 2018-19 that has three areas of focus:

- Address economic exploitation of families in poverty
- Expand access to jobs and fair wages
- Extend supports for working families

Facts on Proposition B—Raise the Minimum Wage

We believe that we can take an important step on November 6th in meeting these goals by supporting **YES ON PROP B** to raise the minimum wage in Missouri.

Prop B will:

- Raise the minimum wage to \$8.60 by 2019
- Gradually increase it by 85 cents a year thereafter until it is \$12 in 2023
- Ensure working families don't fall behind again by increasing the minimum wage with the cost of living each year after 2023
- Increase penalties for employers that break the law by paying less than minimum wage

Why WFSTL Supports Prop B

The minimum wage is a labor standard that was originally established to keep employees and their families out of poverty. But the current wage floor of \$7.85 falls short of that promise. In fact, a woman with two children working full time at minimum wage earns just over \$16,000 per year before taxes. That is \$52,000+ less a year than what it takes to raise two kids in St. Louis County.²

Who will benefit from increasing the minimum wage?

Raising the minimum wage would benefit working families throughout our state, and it would significantly improve the lives of hundreds of thousands women who account for 50 percent of the workforce in Missouri, yet comprise 61 percent of workers whose incomes would rise by increasing the minimum wage.³



And it will benefit thousands of children! Over 260,000 children in Missouri have a parent who would benefit from the minimum wage increase.⁴

References:

1. MU Truman School of Public Policy, *The Status of Women in Missouri: 2016*
2. *Family Budget Calculator*. Available at www.epi.org/resources/budget/
3. EPI analysis of Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Group microdata (2016) and CBO Economic Projections (June 2017).
4. Ibid.