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Maine Minimum Wage Increase, Question 4 (2016)

The **Maine Minimum Wage Increase**, also known as **Question 4**, was on the November 8, 2016, ballot in Maine as an indirect initiated state statute. It was **approved**.

A **"yes"** vote supported gradually increasing the state's minimum wage to \$12 by 2020, thereafter adjusting the minimum wage with fluctuations in the consumer price index.^[1]

A **"no"** vote opposed increasing the minimum wage to \$12 by 2020, thereby keeping a state minimum wage of \$7.50.

Maine Question 4



Election date

November 8,
2016

Topic

Minimum wage

Status

✓ *Approved*

| | |
|-------------|---------------|
| Type | Origin |
| State | Citizens |
| statute | |

Aftermath

On November 22, 2016, the group Restaurant Workers of Maine started a petition drive to modify the newly passed minimum wage law to reinstate the tipped wage credit in Maine. The group, who stated that they had collected 300 signatures by November 23, said they hoped to bring the issue to the attention of legislators in order to change the tipped credit portion of the law.^[2]

Maine Department of Labor

On December 15, 2016, the state Department of Labor announced that it would not punish employers who did not comply with the portion of law enacted by Question 4 that deals with increasing the minimum wage for tipped workers. The law took effect on January 7, 2017.^[3]

Legislation passed to amend Question 4

See also: Legislative alteration

**2016
measures**



November 8

Sen. Roger Katz (R-15) introduced Legislative Document 673 (LD 673) into the Maine State Legislature during the 2017 legislative session. LD 673 was designed to restore the state's tip credit that allowed employers to count employees' tips toward wages, as long as the tip credit does not exceed 50 percent of the minimum wage. Question 4 required the minimum wage for tipped workers to increase each year until it reached \$12 in 2024. With the tip credit restored, employers would be allowed to pay tipped workers \$6 per hour at minimum.^[4]

The state Senate voted 23-12 in favor of this bill on June 7, 2017. The state House voted 110-37 in favor of the bill on June 13, 2017, sending the bill back to the Senate.^[5] The bill failed the final enactment vote in the Senate on June 19. The House amended the bill to remove the emergency clause, which required a two-thirds vote to pass. Without the two-thirds requirement, both the House and the Senate passed LD 673 on June 22, 2017. On June 26, 2017, Gov. Paul LePage signed the bill into law.^{[6][7]}

Legislation proposed to amend or repeal Question 4

See also: Legislative alteration

At least six other bills that would amend or repeal sections of the law enacted by Question 4 were introduced in Maine's 2017 legislative session. Proposals included the following:

- Legislative Document 778 was designed to repeal the provision of Question 4 that tied the state's minimum wage to inflation following January of 2021. This bill died in the Senate after the House gave it initial approval.^[8]
- Legislative Document 775 was designed to prevent Maine's minimum wage from exceeding the average minimum wage "paid in the New England states, as determined by the Commissioner of Labor." It died in committee.^[9]
- Legislative Document 971 would have exempted seasonal employees or those under the age of 18 or those claimed as a dependent by someone else from the minimum wage law. It died in committee.^[10]
- Legislative Document 1005 would have removed the annual \$1 per hour increases established by Question 4, increasing the state's minimum wage to \$9 per hour rather than \$12. It also would have reinstated the tipped wage credit and removed the consumer price index adjustments. LD 1005 died in committee.^[11]
- Legislative Document 702—similar to LD 673—would have restored the tip credit. It died in committee.^[12]
- Another bill—Legislative Document 774—was introduced that was not designed to directly repeal or amend the provisions enacted by Question 4 but was written to establish a lower minimum wage for any student under 21 years of age. This bill died in committee.^[13]

Governor LePage

Gov. Paul LePage (R) asked lawmakers to change the law to allow the minimum wage increase to be phased in over a longer period of time and to remove any automatic increases in the future. His proposal also asked to restore the lower minimum wage for tipped workers. Maine is one of 12

Question 1



Question 2



Question 3



Question 4



Question 5



Question 6



Polls


Voter guides

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finance**

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costs**

states with no restrictions on how soon or with what majority the legislature can amend or repeal initiated state statutes.^[14] On December 17, 2016, he announced that the Maine Department of Labor would not enforce tipped worker wage changes until January 31, 2017.^[15] Before swearing in members of Maine's 128th Legislature, Gov. LePage again urged legislators to change aspects of the minimum wage increase introduced by Question 4, as well as the surcharge tax on incomes over \$200,000 introduced by Question 2.^[16]

Election results

| Question 4 | | |
|--|----------------|---------------|
| Result | Votes | Percentage |
|  Yes | 420,892 | 55.50% |
| No | 337,486 | 44.50% |

Election results from Maine Secretary of State

Vote in Pivot Counties

See also: Pivot Counties: The counties that voted Obama-Obama-Trump from 2008-2016 and Pivot Counties in Maine

Voters in Maine passed Question 4, with 55.5 percent voting to enact the initiative. At the county level, the vote ranged from 45.0 percent in Piscataquis County to 61.2 percent in Knox County.^[17]

The seven counties that voted for Hillary Clinton for president in 2016, and Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012, passed the measure by an average of 57.8 percent. Piscataquis County, the one county in Maine to vote Republican in the 2008, 2012, and 2016 presidential elections, voted against the measure, with 45.0 percent supporting.

Maine's other eight counties voted for Obama in 2008 and 2012 and then flipped to the Republican candidate Donald Trump in 2016. Ballotpedia calls these Obama-Obama-Trump counties Pivot Counties. Averaging across the state's eight Pivot Counties, support for the measure was 51.1 percent.

By winning eight counties that Obama won in 2008 and 2012, Donald Trump was able to secure one electoral vote in Maine for winning the 2nd Congressional District in the northern part of the state. Although Maine has awarded two of its electoral votes in presidential elections based on who wins each congressional district since 1972, the two electoral votes had never been split until 2016. In 2008 and 2012, Obama won the vote in both congressional districts.^[18]

The average yes vote percentage on Question 4 in Pivot Counties was 51.14 percent, which was 6.14 percent more than in the Republican county and 6.65 percent less than in Democratic counties.

| Vote on Question 4 (2016) in Maine Pivot, Democratic, and Republican Counties | | | | |
|--|-------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| County | Type | Trump Margin in 2016 | Percent "Yes" on Question 4 | Percent "No" on Question 4 |
| Androscoggin | Pivot | 9.39% | 50.94% | 49.06% |
| Aroostook | Pivot | 17.19% | 53.72% | 46.28% |
| Cumberland | Democratic | -26.35% | 61.19% | 38.81% |
| Franklin | Pivot | 5.47% | 51.88% | 48.12% |
| Hancock | Democratic | -7.51% | 55.44% | 44.56% |
| Kennebec | Pivot | 3.58% | 51.44% | 48.56% |
| Knox | Democratic | -14.24% | 60.39% | 39.61% |
| Lincoln | Democratic | -2.39% | 56.24% | 43.76% |
| Oxford | Pivot | 12.94% | 53.20% | 46.80% |
| Penobscot | Pivot | 10.91% | 46.85% | 53.15% |
| Piscataquis | Republican | 25.14% | 45.00% | 55.00% |
| Sagadahoc | Democratic | -6.29% | 56.49% | 43.51% |
| Somerset | Pivot | 22.67% | 46.93% | 53.07% |
| Sagadahoc | Democratic | -0.28% | 54.24% | 45.76% |
| Washington | Pivot | 18.44% | 54.13% | 45.87% |
| York | Democratic | -4.76% | 60.50% | 39.50% |
| All Pivot Counties | | 12.57% | 51.14% | 48.86% |

Overview

Initiative design

In addition to incrementally increasing the general minimum wage to \$12 an hour by 2020, Question 4 also increased the direct wage for tipped workers from half of the minimum wage to \$5 an hour in 2017. Question 4 dictated that the minimum wage for tipped workers continue to increase by \$1 per year until it is equal to the general minimum wage, with a deadline of 2024.^[19]

Competing measure

In Maine, the legislature was allowed to put alternative measures on the ballot to compete with citizen initiatives. Governor Paul LePage (R) and business groups attempted to pitch a smaller wage increase to the legislature, and Republicans on the legislative budget committee stated they would only negotiate new spending if Democrats supported an alternate minimum wage measure. In spite of these efforts, none of the bills passed the Maine House of Representatives, so there was no competing measure on the ballot.^{[20][21][22][23]}

Early polling suggested wide support for an increase in the state's minimum wage.

Minimum wage measures in other states

Voters in four other states also voted on minimum wage measures. Proposition 206 in Arizona and Amendment 70 in Colorado were approved and raised the minimum wage to \$12 by 2020. Washington's Initiative 1433 was approved and raised the minimum wage to \$13.50 by 2020, while Referred Law 20 in South Dakota was defeated and would have reduced the minimum wage for workers under the age of 18 from \$8.50 to \$7.50.

Text of Measure

Ballot question

The question appeared on the ballot as follows:^{[24][19]}

“ Do you want to raise the minimum hourly wage of \$7.50 to \$9 in 2017, with annual \$1 increases up to \$12 in 2020, and annual cost-of-living increases thereafter; and do you want to raise the direct wage for service workers who receive tips from half the minimum wage to \$5 in 2017, with annual \$1 increases until it reaches the adjusted minimum wage?^[25] ”

Ballot summary

The summary for Question 4 was as follows:^[26]

“ This initiated bill raises the minimum wage to \$9.00 per hour in 2017 and by \$1.00 per hour each year after that until it is \$12.00 per hour in 2020. The minimum wage then increases at the same rate as the cost of living. The minimum wage for workers who receive tips increases to \$5.00 per hour in 2017 and then by \$1.00 per hour each year until it matches the minimum wage for all other workers, which occurs no sooner than 2024.^[25] ”

Intent and content

The following intent and content statement was prepared by the office of the attorney general:^[27]

This citizen-initiated legislation would increase the minimum wage for workers who are paid by the hour as well as for service workers who are eligible to receive tips. The existing minimum wage under state law (in effect since October 1, 2009) is \$7.50 per hour for hourly workers, and half that amount for service workers who are eligible to receive tips and whose employers choose to consider tips as part of employee wages.

For hourly wage-earners, the legislation would increase the minimum wage to \$9 per hour, beginning on January 1, 2017. That rate would increase each year by \$1 per hour until it reached \$12 per hour in 2020. After 2020, the minimum wage would increase each year by the amount of the increase in the cost of living that year, calculated according to the Consumer Price Index and rounded to the nearest multiple of 5 cents.

For service workers paid partially with tips, the legislation would require employers to pay a

Full text

The full text of the measure was as follows:^[26]

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

“ **Sec. 1. 26 MRSA §664, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2007, c. 640, §4, is further amended to read:

1. Minimum wage. ~~The minimum hourly wage is \$6.50 per hour. Starting October 1, 2006, the minimum hourly wage is \$6.75 per hour. Starting October 1, 2007, the minimum hourly wage is \$7.00 per hour. Starting October 1, 2008, the minimum hourly wage is \$7.25 per hour. Starting October 1, 2009, the minimum hourly wage is \$7.50 per hour. Starting January 1, 2017, the minimum hourly wage is \$9.00 per hour; starting January 1, 2018, the minimum hourly wage is \$10.00 per hour; starting January 1, 2019, the minimum hourly wage is \$11.00 per hour; and starting January 1, 2020, the minimum hourly wage is \$12.00 per hour. On January 1, 2021 and each January 1st thereafter, the minimum hourly wage then in effect must be increased by the increase, if any, in the cost of living. The increase in the cost of living must be measured by the percentage increase, if any, as of August of the previous year over the level as of August of the year preceding that year in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers, CPI-W, for the Northeast Region, or its successor index, as published by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics or its successor agency, with the amount of the minimum wage increase rounded to the nearest multiple of 5¢. If the highest federal minimum wage is increased in excess of the minimum wage in effect under this section, the minimum wage under this section is increased to the same amount, effective on the same date as the increase in the federal minimum wage, but in no case may the minimum wage exceed the minimum wage otherwise in effect under this section by more than \$1 per hour and must be increased in accordance with this section thereafter.~~

Sec. 2. 26 MRSA §664, sub-§2, as amended by PL 2011, c. 118, §3, is further amended to read:

2. Tip credit. An employer may consider tips as part of the wages of a service employee, but such a tip credit may not exceed 50% of the minimum hourly wage established in this section. Starting January 1, 2017, the minimum cash wage paid directly to a tipped service employee may not be less than \$5.00 per hour, and the tip credit may not exceed the difference between the minimum cash wage paid directly to a tipped service employee and the minimum hourly wage established under subsection 1. Starting January 1, 2018, and on each January 1st thereafter, the minimum cash wage paid directly to a tipped service employee must be increased by an additional \$1.00 per hour until it reaches the same amount as the annually adjusted minimum hourly wage established under subsection 1, except that if the minimum cash wage paid directly to a tipped service employee is less than \$1.00 less than the annually adjusted minimum hourly wage, it must be increased by that lesser amount. An employer who elects to use the tip credit, until it is eliminated under this subsection, must inform the affected employee in advance and must be able to show that the employee receives at least the minimum hourly wage when direct wages and the tip credit are combined. Upon a satisfactory showing by the employee or the employee's representative that the actual tips received were less than the tip credit, the employer shall increase the direct wages by the difference.

The tips received by a service employee become the property of the employee and may not be shared with the employer. Tips that are automatically included in the customer's bill or that are charged to a credit card must be treated like tips given to the service employee. A tip that is charged to a credit card must be paid by the employer to the employee by the next regular payday and may not be held while the employer is awaiting reimbursement from a credit card company.^[25]

”

Fiscal impact

The Maine Office of Fiscal and Program Review's fiscal impact statement stated that the Bureau of Labor Standards within the Maine Department of Labor would need \$16,500 per year over the four years of the wage increase implementation for updating the minimum wage poster and other publications; mailing the new poster and publications; and traveling for compliance, education, and outreach. The review also stated that the increased wages required by this initiative would create costs to municipalities which would vary by individual municipality and cannot be estimated at this time.^[27]

Support

The group Mainers for Fair Wages led the support campaign for Question 4.^{[1][28]}

Supporters

- Maine AFL-CIO^[1]
- Maine People's Alliance
- Maine Small Business Coalition^[29]
- Maine Speaker of the House, Rep. Mark Eves (D-6)^[30]
- The Ballot Initiative Strategy Center^[31]
- Maine State Employees Association SEIU Local 1989^[32]
- Karen Heck, former mayor of Waterville^[33]
- Rev. Stephen Lane, bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Maine^[34]
- Jack McKay, Eastern Maine Labor Council^[35]



Arguments in favor

The argument that the minimum wage does not provide a living wage for those workers was a central theme in the arguments in favor of Question 4.

Proponents claimed that raising the minimum wage will reduce the number of Maine residents who need public assistance and is particularly important for single parents and the elderly. Supporters also stated that an increase in the minimum wage could boost the local economy by increasing the spending power of Maine workers.



Mainers for Fair Wages event

Katie Logue, a volunteer campaigning for Question 4, said:^[36]

“ I work at a convenience store for just over the state minimum wage and I struggle to support myself and my family. When you're this close to the edge, one emergency can ruin everything. It wasn't too long ago that we were forced to live in a homeless shelter while I was working full time but unable to keep up with the bills. ... It just isn't right that there are people like me all over the state who are working hard every day but can't get ahead.^[25] ”

Adam Lee, chairman of Lee Auto Malls, stated:^[29]

“ When working Mainers make a decent living, they spend that extra money in our communities. It's good for the whole economy, including my business.^[25] ”

Amy Halsted submitted the following public comments on behalf of Mainers for Fair Wages to the secretary of state's voter's guide in support of Question 4:^[27]

“ The costs of groceries, housing and other basic necessities keep going up, but wages haven't. With passage of Question 4, Maine's minimum wage will increase from \$7.50 an hour to \$9 in 2017 and then by one dollar each year until it reaches \$12 an hour in 2020. After that it will keep pace with the cost of living. ”

Important for Maine women and families

This initiative is particularly important for women, who make up 6 in 10 of the 181,000 Mainers who will see a raise. For single moms struggling to provide for their families on a salary of \$300 a week for full-time work, even a small raise is a lifeline.

Important for Maine seniors and those who care for them

Question 4 will affect one in four workers over the age of 55, many of whom can't afford to save for retirement. It will also boost wages for vitally important workers, including EMTs, firefighters and home health aides, who make less than \$12 an hour.

A question of basic fairness Question 4 will also increase the subminimum wage for service workers who receive tips from \$3.75 to \$5 in 2017 and then gradually raise it to the adjusted minimum wage. Even with tips, these workers make an average of just \$8.72 an hour. They're twice as likely to fall under the poverty line and nearly three times as likely to rely on food stamps to feed their families.

A boost for small businesses and local economies

This initiative will create stronger communities by putting money into the pockets of workers who will spend it locally. It's been endorsed by more than 600 local businesses and by the Maine Small Business Coalition.

It's time to begin to build an economy that works for everyone.

Learn more at fairwagemaine.com^[25] ”

Campaign ads

| | |
|--|--|
| Yes on 4 ad paid for by Mainers for Fair Wages | Yes on 4 ad paid for by Mainers for Fair Wages |
|--|--|

Opposition

Restaurateurs for a Strong Maine Economy registered in opposition to Question 4.^[37]

Opponents

- Gov. Paul LePage (R)
- Rep. Beth O'Connor (R-5)^[38]
- Maine State Chamber of Commerce^[39]
- Maine Restaurant Association^[39]
- Maine Innkeepers Association^[39]
- Cory King, Executive Director of Skowhegan Area Chamber of Commerce^[40]
- Maine Heritage Policy Center^[41]
- The National Federation of Independent Business, Maine^[42]
- Don Roberts, former Augusta city councilor^[43]
- Sen. Andre Cushing (R-10)^[44]
- Curtis Picard, executive director, Retail Association of Maine^[45]
- Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce
- Owen Casas (I), 2016 candidate for the Maine House of Representatives^[46]

Vote No on Question 4 ad by the Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce

Arguments against

Opponents to Question 4 claimed that a \$12 minimum wage was too high and would be detrimental to small business owners and would discourage new businesses from coming to Maine.

Gov. Paul LePage (R) submitted a proposal to the legislature for an alternate minimum wage measure designed to raise the wage to \$10 an hour rather than \$12 an hour, but the measure failed to pass the House of Representatives, so there was no competing measure on the ballot.^[47]

Peter Gore, vice president for government relations at the state chamber, said:^[29]

“ It is going to increase the cost of doing business on an ongoing basis year after year and is going to be particularly detrimental to small businesses in rural areas, to restaurants and to innkeepers who have restaurants attached.^[25] ”

Gov. LePage argued:^[29]

“ Raising the minimum wage, the way they are planning to do it, would put us back 25 years, it would be devastating. It's going to bring us up to \$12 in four years, highest in the nation. You can't attract people if you are the highest minimum wage.^[25] ”

Campaign finance

See also: Campaign finance requirements for Maine ballot measures

As of January 18, 2017, **the support campaign for this initiative featured ballot question committees that received a total of \$2,369,114.47 in contributions**, consisting of \$1,949,814.76 in cash donations and \$419,299.71 in in-kind donations—contributions of services or goods. The support campaign had spent \$1,929,840.65. **The opposition campaign for this initiative received \$136,725.00 in donations** and spent \$132,073.53.^[37]

| Total campaign contributions: | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Support: | \$2,369,114.47 |
| Opposition: | \$136,725.00 |

As of January 18, 2017, the top five donors in support of this initiative provided about 44.6 percent of the campaign's total war chest. The Fairness Project, which was the top donor, gave \$323,000, which amounted to more than 14 percent of the total supporting contributions.^[37]

Restaurants made a significant amount of donations to the opposition campaign, particularly those located in Portland where the minimum wage was recently raised. Portland restaurants donated more than \$22,000 to Restaurateurs for a Strong Maine Economy, while restaurants from the rest of the state contributed more than \$25,000.^{[48][37]}

Support

Cash donations

The following ballot question committees were registered to support this initiative as of January 18, 2017. The chart below shows cash donations and expenditures current as of the most recent campaign finance reports filed on January 18, 2017. For a summary of in-kind donations received by each PAC, click here.^[37]

Note: Committees that have less listed for either donations or expenditures than reported on the state's ethics commission website were used to provide funds to other committees and were not designed to spend all of their money directly on a supporting or opposing campaign. See Ballotpedia's campaign finance methodology below.

| Committee | Amount raised^[49] | Amount spent |
|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Mainers for Fair Wages | \$80,743.53 | \$33,633.87 |
| Maine People's Alliance - BQC | \$994,508.43 | \$741,732.86 |
| Maine Center For Economic Policy - BQC ^[50] | \$8,142.50 | \$45,005.58 |
| Fairness Project Maine PAC ^[51] | \$0 | \$0 |
| Maine AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education PAC | \$7,732.50 | \$14,946.94 |
| Mainers for Fair Wages PAC | \$1,037,062.24 | \$856,572.64 |
| Planned Parenthood Maine Action Fund PAC ^[52] | \$189,506.65 | \$186,480.48 |
| Maine AFL-CIO PAC ^[53] | \$14,275.26 | \$14,275.26 |
| Maine State Employees Association PAC ^[54] | \$30,457.44 | \$30,457.44 |
| Mainers for Informed Voters - A Project of BISC | \$6,685.92 | \$6,735.58 |
| Total | \$2,369,114.47 | \$1,929,840.65 |

Top donors

As of January 18, 2017, the following were the top five donors in support of this initiative.^[37]

| Donor | Cash | In-kind | Total |
|---------------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| The Fairness Project | \$323,000.00 | \$0.00 | \$323,000.00 |
| National Education Association | \$231,000.00 | \$0.00 | \$231,000.00 |
| The Maine People's Alliance | \$0.00 | \$199,784.89 | \$199,784.89 |
| Mainers for Fair Wages PAC | \$131,000.00 | \$0.00 | \$131,000.00 |
| Restaurant Opportunities Center | \$100,000.00 | \$0.00 | \$100,000.00 |

In-kind donations

As of January 18, 2017, PACs registered to support this initiative also received in-kind donations in the amount of \$419,299.71. The in-kind donation totals for each PAC are listed below.^[37]

- Maine People's Alliance - BQC: \$195,071.31
- Mainers for Fair Wages: \$47,109.66
- Mainers for Fair Wages PAC: \$177,118.74
- Planned Parenthood Maine Action Fund PAC: \$0.00
- Fairness Project Maine PAC: \$0.00
- Maine Center For Economic Policy - BQC: \$0.00
- Maine AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education PAC: \$0.00
- Maine AFL-CIO PAC: \$0.00
- Maine State Employees Association PAC: \$0.00
- Mainers for Informed Voters - A Project of BISC: \$0.00

Opposition

The PACs Restaurateurs for a Strong Maine Economy and Maine People for Maine Jobs registered in opposition to Question 4. As of January 18, 2017, the campaigns had raised a total of \$136,725.00 and spent a total of \$132,073.53.^[37]

| Committee | Amount raised | Amount spent |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| Maine People for Maine Jobs | \$74,108.43 | \$74,028.43 |
| Restaurateurs for a Strong Maine Economy | \$62,616.57 | \$58,045.10 |
| Total | \$136,725.00 | \$132,073.53 |

Top donors

As of January 18, 2017, the following were the top five donors in opposition to this initiative.^[37]

Note: *Restaurateurs for a Strong Maine Economy has donated \$58,528.43 of its funds directly to Maine People for Maine Jobs. While this figure is reflected in the Top Donors list below, those funds are not included in the amount raised total for Restaurateurs for a Strong Maine Economy listed above, as Ballotpedia does not count money used in PAC to PAC donations twice.*

| Donor | Amount |
|--|-------------|
| Restaurateurs for a Strong Maine Economy | \$58,528.43 |
| Maine Restaurant Association | \$16,465.00 |
| Maine Innkeepers PAC | \$8,000.00 |
| Darden Inc | \$7,500.00 |
| DiMillo's on the Water | \$5,000.00 |

Methodology

Ballotpedia calculates campaign finance based on the political committees registered to support or oppose a measure and independent expenditures, when relevant and available. When a committee is registered to support or oppose multiple measures it is impossible to distinguish between funds used for one measure and funds used for the other.

In calculating campaign finance for supporting and opposing committees, Ballotpedia does not count donations or expenditures from one ballot measure committee to another since that would amount to counting the same money twice. This method is used to give the most accurate information concerning how much funding was actually provided to and spent by the opposing and supporting campaigns.

Ballotpedia subtracts out committee-to-committee contributions—both cash donations and in-kind contributions. Because of this, it is possible for certain committees to have negative contributions. Negative contributions mean that a committee has provided more contributions to other committees than it has received. If expenditures exceed contributions, it means the committee has accrued unpaid bills, has unpaid or unforgiven loans, or has contributed a certain amount of in-kind services to another committee.

Ballotpedia provides information about all reported in-kind donations. In-kind contributions are also counted toward total expenditures since, with in-kind gifts, the contribution and services or goods are provided simultaneously. Ballotpedia does this to provide the most accurate information about the cash-on-hand of supporting and opposing campaigns.

Media editorials

Support

- **Portland Press Herald** said:^[55]

“Wage violations hurt not only employees but also honest businesses, whose labor costs are undercut by unscrupulous employers, and state and local economies, which lose out when fewer dollars are circulating to businesses. Passing a \$12 state minimum would pave the way for stronger enforcement, rewarding fair-minded Maine employers and helping make sure all Maine workers get paid what they’ve earned.”^[25]

In a later editorial, the **Portland Press Herald** and sister publications **Kennebec Journal** and **Morning Sentinel** also said:^[56]

“The minimum wage has steadily lost value now for nearly 50 years, even as the people who hold low-wage jobs have gotten more educated and productive, more likely to be a family’s breadwinner, and less likely to advance to a better job. That has left millions of Americans unable to support themselves and their loved ones even while working full-time, and that’s why we are endorsing a yes vote on Question 4 on the Nov. 8 ballot to raise Maine’s minimum wage.”^[25]

- **Bangor Daily News** said the following:^[57]

“We favor a raise for Maine’s low-wage workers because we know that a meaningful income boost can make a difference for a low-income family, and a minimum wage hike would help many adults who work full time and live at or near the poverty level. But we also want to be sure that such a raise doesn’t unduly burden businesses. We want to see the benefits outweigh the drawbacks of this policy change. We believe the minimum wage hike proposed by Question 4 meets that standard. We recommend a “yes” vote.”^[25]

Opposition

The **Mount Desert Islander** said the following:^[58]

“ An Act to Raise the Minimum Wage is noble. The current base rate is inadequate. But this law would combine with other new labor regulations and health insurance rate increases to create a perfect storm of Maine economic depression.

We strongly urge a 'no' vote here. Your individual legislative representatives and senators need to be pressured for more responsible changes in Maine's wage laws.^[25] ”

Polls

| Maine Minimum Wage Increase, Question 4 (2016) [hide] | | | | | |
|---|---------|--------|-----------|-----------------|-------------|
| Poll | Support | Oppose | Undecided | Margin of error | Sample size |
| University of New Hampshire Survey Center 10/20/16 - 10/25/16 | 57% | 35% | 8% | +/-3.6 | 761 |
| Portland Press Herald/University of New Hampshire Survey Center 9/15/16 - 9/20/16 | 60% | 28% | 12% | +/-4.3 | 513 |
| AVERAGES | 58.5% | 31.5% | 10% | +/-3.95 | 637 |
| <i>Note: A "0%" finding means the candidate was not a part of the poll. The polls above may not reflect all polls that have been conducted in this race. Those displayed are a random sampling chosen by Ballotpedia staff. If you would like to nominate another poll for inclusion in the table, send an email to editor@ballotpedia.org.</i> | | | | | |

The Maine People's Resource Center conducted a poll of 452 likely voters in Portland, Maine, between August 22 and August 24, 2015. One of the questions in the poll was: "In November of next year, there will likely be a ballot initiative that would raise the statewide minimum wage in Maine to \$9 per hour in 2017 and by \$1 each year after that until it is \$12 in 2020. It would then increase at the same rate as the cost of living. If the vote were held today would you vote yes or no on this referendum?" **Of the respondents, 76 percent said they would vote "yes," 17.7 percent said they would vote "no," and 6.3 percent were undecided.**^[59]

A company called Critical Insights conducted a poll of 600 potential Maine voters between September 24 and September 30, 2015. One of the questions in the poll was: "Do you support or oppose an increase in minimum wage in the State of Maine?" This question did not reference this particular initiative proposal or a specific minimum wage increase amount. Out of the total, 68 percent of respondents said they did favor an increase in the minimum wage in Maine, 22 percent said they were opposed, and 10 percent said they did not know.^[60]

Reports and analyses

Fiscal impact

The Maine Office of Fiscal and Program Review prepared the following fiscal impact statement:^[27]

“ The Bureau of Labor Standards within the Maine Department of Labor will require General Fund appropriations of \$16,500 per year for each of the 4 years that the minimum wage is increased and for any subsequent year that the minimum wage would be raised by the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers for the Northeast Region. Of this annual amount, \$3,500 per year would be for updating the minimum wage poster and other related publications, \$5,000 would be for postage costs to distribute the updated poster and publications and \$8,000 would be for travel costs associated with compliance, education and outreach.

The first step on the lowest salary rate schedule in State Government is \$8.43 per hour. Currently there is no one being paid at that level. There are currently 2 employees being paid \$9.41 per hour. The 4-step increase in the minimum wage in the proposed initiative may not increase salary costs to the State until the \$10.00 per hour rate begins on January 1, 2018. The future State Government impact of the changes to the minimum wage will depend on the salary schedules in place at the time the increases occur and cannot be estimated at this time.

The increased wages required by this initiative would create costs to municipalities which would vary by individual municipality. As with State Government, the municipal impact would depend on the existing rates of pay for the lowest paid employees in each municipality at the time a higher wage would be imposed and cannot be estimated at this time.^[25] ”

MIT Living Wage Calculator

Dr. Amy K. Glasmeier, working with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, designed a "living wage calculator" designed to use "a market-based approach that draws upon geographically specific expenditure data related to a family's likely minimum food, child care, health insurance, housing, transportation, and other basic necessities (e.g. clothing, personal care items, etc.) costs. The living wage draws on these cost elements and the rough effects of income and payroll taxes to determine the minimum employment earnings necessary to meet a family's basic needs while also maintaining self-sufficiency." The technical documentation and methodology used by the program is available here.^[61]

Below is a chart showing the living wage calculators findings for the state of Maine. The specific living wage for any given city or rural area varies, and more specific results can be found here.

| Hourly Wages | 1 Adult | 1 Adult 1 Child | 1 Adult 2 Children | 1 Adult 3 Children | 2 Adults (One Working) | 2 Adults (One Working) 1 Child | 2 Adults (One Working) 2 Children | 2 Adults (One Working) 3 Children | 2 Adults | 2 Adults 1 Child | 2 Adults 2 Children | 2 Adults 3 Children |
|--------------|---------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Living Wage | \$10.61 | \$22.36 | \$26.71 | \$33.42 | \$17.31 | \$20.85 | \$23.48 | \$26.12 | \$8.65 | \$12.33 | \$14.74 | \$17.14 |
| Poverty Wage | \$5.00 | \$7.00 | \$9.00 | \$11.00 | \$7.00 | \$9.00 | \$11.00 | \$13.00 | \$3.00 | \$4.00 | \$5.00 | \$6.00 |
| Minimum Wage | \$7.50 | \$7.50 | \$7.50 | \$7.50 | \$7.50 | \$7.50 | \$7.50 | \$7.50 | \$7.50 | \$7.50 | \$7.50 | \$7.50 |

Maine Heritage Policy Center

The Maine Heritage Policy Center (MHPC) released a report titled *Unintended Consequences: How the minimum wage increase in Question 4 would kill jobs*. The report found that the increased minimum wage would lead to unsustainable labor costs that could cause businesses to reduce employment and increase their prices. The MHPC also estimated that more than 14,000 jobs would be lost if the wage were increased and that consumer prices would increase, leading to an increase of \$2,850 in expenses for the average Maine family every year. The report also indicated that Question 4 would not decrease poverty in Maine because many of the poor citizens of Maine did not work and the majority of minimum wage jobs were held by teenagers living at home.^[62]

The full report can be found [here](#).

Maine Center for Economic Policy

The Maine Center for Economic Policy (MECEP) published a report that found that a \$12 minimum wage would increase the wages for one in three Maine workers by nearly \$3,500. MECEP estimated that 90 percent of workers who would be affected by the increase would be over the age of 20, and most of them work full-time and have an education beyond high school. The report indicated that the percent of Mainers needing public assistance would decrease by nearly 7 percent. The report claimed that a \$3,000 increase in income for low-income families with young children corresponds with a 17 percent increase in a child's lifetime earnings. The report also found that the increase would boost spending and improve business productivity.^[63]

The full report can be found [here](#).

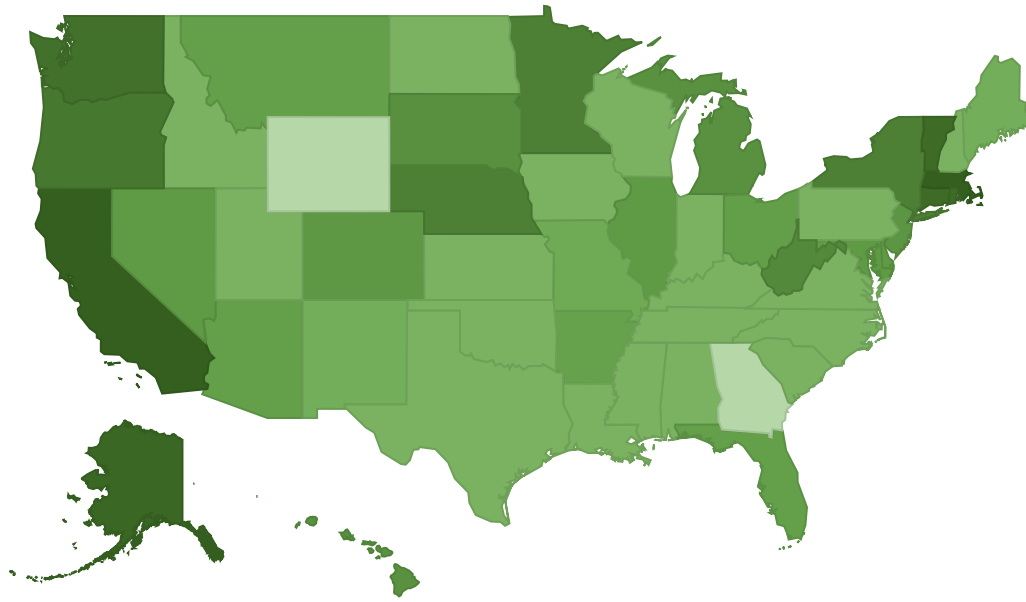
Background

2016 minimum wages

Below is a chart detailing the minimum wage in all 50 states, plus the District of Columbia, in 2016. Washington, D.C., had the highest minimum wage at \$10.10 per hour. Georgia and Wyoming both had state minimum wages at \$5.15 per hour, which was below the federal minimum wage.^[64]

Click "Show" in the State column to expand.

| [show] State | 2016 minimum wage | Rank |
|-----------------|----------------------|------|
|-----------------|----------------------|------|



This map was current as of December 31, 2016.

Path to the ballot

See also: Laws governing the initiative process in Maine and Signature requirements for ballot measures in Maine

- Amy Halsted submitted the petition, and a title and summary for Question 4 were issued on June 2, 2015.
- To qualify for the ballot, proponents needed to collect 61,123 signatures—which is 10 percent of the total votes cast for governor in November 2014—by February 1, 2016.
- On January 14, 2016, the group submitted more than 80,000 signatures.^{[67][29][39]}
- The Maine secretary of state has, by statute, 30 days after signatures have been submitted to review signatures for validity and announce a decision about whether a submitted initiative has made the ballot. The 30-day deadline for this initiative was February 13, 2016. The secretary of state said an answer about the fate of the measure was slated to come on February 16, 2016.
- On February 16, 2016, the secretary of state announced that the petition had collected 86,438 signatures—75,275 of which were valid—which was enough for the measure to be certified for the ballot.
- As an indirect initiated state statute, Question 4 was sent to the Maine Legislature, which had the option to either pass the law or not take any action and allow the measure to go on

the ballot for voters to decide. The legislature did not act on the measure, ensuring its appearance on the ballot in November 2016.^{[20][23]}

- The signature petition for this initiative would have expired on December 2, 2016, if signatures had not been submitted.

Cost of signature collection:

Sponsors of the measure hired Maine People's Alliance to collect signatures for the petition to qualify this measure for the ballot. A total of \$244,930.53 was spent to collect the 61,123 valid signatures required to put this measure before voters, resulting in a total cost per required signature (CPRS) of \$4.01. The Maine People's Alliance BQC reported spending \$244,930.53 on "phone and field canvasses" prior to and up to the time of signature submission. While reports indicate that at least \$120,000 of these expenses were spent specifically on signature collection, it cannot be determined how much of these expenses were spent on other canvassing-related activities.^[68]





Competing measure

- On March 17, 2016, the Maine House of Representatives voted against a motion to send the initiative to a legislative committee before going to voters in November. On the same day, Rep. Susan Austin (R-67) cast a vote in the labor committee to attach an alternative, competing measure backed by business groups to a minimum wage bill carried over from last session.^{[69][70]}
- The House rejected the bill carrying an amendment with the competing minimum wage proposal in a 78-67 vote on March 24, 2016.^[71]
- On March 30, 2016, Republicans on the legislature's budget committee stated they would only negotiate new spending if the Democrats agreed to support the alternate minimum wage measure. On April 5, 2016, Republicans in the House blocked an \$18 million spending package proposed by Democrats. Rep. Tom Winsor (R-71) said that the "uncertainties" of the minimum wage referendum question require the state to be careful about additional spending.^{[21][72]}
- On April 5, 2016, Gov. Paul LePage (R) submitted a proposal for an alternate minimum wage measure that would raise the wage to \$10 an hour rather than \$12 an hour. The measure would need to be passed in both houses of the legislature to be placed before voters.^[47]
- Maine business groups asked the legislature to pass emergency legislation to increase the minimum wage to \$10 an hour over time. The senate voted in favor of the emergency bill 22-12, which was not enough votes to reach the two-thirds majority needed to pass emergency legislation. The bill died between the Senate and the House and was not on the November 2016 ballot.^{[73][74][75]}

Related measures

See also: Minimum wage on the ballot

Minimum wage measures on the ballot in 2016

| State | Minimum wage measure on the ballot in 2016 |
|--------------|--|
| State | Measures |
| Arizona | Arizona Minimum Wage and Paid Time Off, Proposition 206  |
| Colorado | Colorado \$12 Minimum Wage, Amendment 70  |
| South Dakota | South Dakota Decreased Youth Minimum Wage Veto Referendum, Referred Law 20  |
| Washington | Washington Minimum Wage Increase, Initiative 1433  |

Recent news

The link below is to the most recent stories in a Google news search for the terms **Maine minimum wage increase Initiative**. These results are automatically generated from Google. Ballotpedia does not curate or endorse these articles.

Maine Minimum Wage Increase, Question 4 (2016) - Google News

State profile



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The phrase "up in Maine" conveys some of the state's distinctive personality - ornery, contrary-minded, almost bullheaded, and rough-hewn. And its current politics, from its polarizing governor to its stark shift toward Donald Trump in 2016, hews to this stereotype.

In the far northeast corner of the United States, Maine is the state geographically closest to Europe, but it was not heavily settled until the mid-19th century, by people from the South and the West - not the usual direction of American migrations. Maine grew in a rush, and then mostly stopped. There were 600,000 people there in 1860, but the population dipped after the Civil War - many soldiers did not return - and it did not top 1 million until the 1970s. In the urbanizing and rapidly changing country of the early 20th century, Maine was

famous for its pointed firs and steady habits, with a few dozen small factory towns and paper-mill hamlets but nothing like a major metropolis.

Despite the Yankee work ethic, Maine ...(read more)

Demographic data for Maine

Presidential voting pattern

See also: *Presidential voting trends in Maine*

Maine voted for the Democratic candidate in all five presidential elections between 2000 and 2016.

Pivot Counties (2016)

Ballotpedia identified 206 counties that voted for Donald Trump (R) in 2016 after voting for Barack Obama (D) in 2008 and 2012. Collectively, Trump won these **Pivot Counties** by more than 580,000 votes. Of these 206 counties, eight are located in Maine, accounting for 3.88 percent of the total pivot counties.^[76]

More Maine coverage on Ballotpedia

- Elections in Maine
- United States congressional delegations from Maine
- Public policy in Maine
- Influencers in Maine
- Maine fact checks
- More...

| | Maine | U.S. |
|---|------------------|-------------|
| Total population: | 1,329,453 | 316,515,021 |
| Land area (sq mi): | 30,843 | 3,531,905 |
| Gender | | |
| Female: | 51.1% | 50.8% |
| Race and ethnicity** | | |
| White: | 95% | 73.6% |
| Black/African American: | 1.1% | 12.6% |
| Asian: | 1.1% | 5.1% |
| Native American: | 0.6% | 0.8% |
| Pacific Islander: | 0% | 0.2% |
| Two or more: | 2% | 3% |
| Hispanic/Latino: | 1.5% | 17.1% |
| Education | | |
| High school graduation rate: | 91.6% | 86.7% |
| College graduation rate: | 29% | 29.8% |
| Income | | |
| Median household income: | \$49,331 | \$53,889 |
| Persons below poverty level: | 16.6% | 11.3% |
| Source: <i>U.S. Census Bureau</i> , "American Community Survey" (5-year estimates 2010-2015) | | |
| <p>**Note: Percentages for race and ethnicity may add up to more than 100 percent because respondents may report more than one race and the Hispanic/Latino ethnicity may be selected in conjunction with any race. Read more about race and ethnicity in the census here.</p> | | |

See also

- 2016 ballot measures
- Maine 2016 ballot measures
- Minimum wage on the ballot
- Minimum wage reports and analyses



External links

- [Maine Secretary of State](#)
- [Maine Citizen's Guide to the Referendum Election](#)

Support

- [Mainers for Fair Wages website](#)
- [Mainers for Fair Wages Facebook](#)
- [Mainers for Fair Wages Twitter](#)
- [Maine People's Alliance website](#)
- [Maine People's Alliance Facebook](#)
- [Maine People's Alliance Twitter](#)

Footnotes

1. *Bangor Daily News*, "Referendum launched for \$12 Maine minimum wage by 2020," April 16, 2015

2. *Portland Press Herald*, "Maine group starts petition to exempt tipped workers from new minimum wage rule," November 23, 2016

Only the first few references on this page are shown above. [Click to show more.](#)

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