

Department of Legislative Services  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2018 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
 First Reader

Senate Bill 235  
 Finance

(Senator Robinson, *et al.*)

Labor and Employment - Minimum Wage - Indexing

This bill indexes the State minimum wage to inflation beginning in fiscal 2020.

Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** State expenditures (all funds) increase by at least \$0.5 million in FY 2020 for additional payroll costs, rising to at least \$2.5 million in FY 2023 (estimates not reflected below); federal fund revenues may cover a portion of these costs. General fund expenditures increase by \$49,300 in FY 2019 for enforcement, with ongoing costs. General fund revenues increase minimally beginning in FY 2020.

(in dollars)	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
GF/FF Rev.	\$0	-	-	-	-
GF Expenditure	\$49,300	\$57,600	\$59,100	\$61,100	\$63,200
GF/SF/FF/HE Exp.	\$0	-	-	-	-
Net Effect	(\$49,300)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)

*Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease*

**Local Effect:** Local government expenditures increase beginning in FY 2020. Any change in local government tax revenues cannot be reliably projected but is expected to be minimal.

**Small Business Effect:** Meaningful.

Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The State minimum wage must be increased by the amount, rounded to the nearest cent, that equals the product of the State minimum wage in effect for the

immediate preceding 12-month period and the average percentage growth in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all urban consumers for the Washington-Baltimore metropolitan area (or a successor index that is published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)) for the immediately preceding 12-month period, as determined by the commissioner. The commissioner must annually determine and announce the State minimum wage, beginning March 1, 2019, for the next fiscal year. If the CPI does not change during a given year, or decreases, the minimum wage remains at the same rate as that of the prior year.

### **Current Law:**

#### *Maryland Wage and Hour Law*

The Maryland Wage and Hour Law is the State complement to the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). State law sets minimum wage standards to provide a maintenance level consistent with the needs of the population. State law specifies that an employee must be paid the greater of the federal minimum wage (which is currently \$7.25 per hour) or \$9.25 per hour. Under Chapter 262 of 2014, the State minimum wage is scheduled to increase to \$10.10 per hour as of July 1, 2018.

However, an employer may pay an employee a wage that equals 85% of the State minimum wage for the first six months that the employee is employed if the employee is younger than age 20. Additionally, an employer of an amusement or a recreational establishment, including a swimming pool, that meets specified conditions may pay an employee a wage that equals the greater of \$7.25 or 85% of the State minimum wage. Exceptions to the minimum wage requirement also exist for a training wage and a disabled employee of a sheltered workshop under specified conditions.

The Maryland Wage and Hour Law and minimum wage requirements do not apply to certain categories of employees, including those defined as administrative, executive, or professional; certain seasonal employees; part-time employees younger than age 16; salesmen and those who work on commission; an employer's immediate family; drive-in theater employees; employees training in a special education program in a public school; employees of an establishment that sells food and drink for on-premises consumption and has an annual gross income of \$400,000 or less; employees employed by an employer who is engaged in canning, freezing, packing, or first processing of perishable or seasonal fresh fruits, vegetables, poultry, or seafood; and certain farm workers.

The employer of a tipped employee is allowed a tip credit that can be applied against the direct wages paid by the employer. The employee can be paid tipping wages so long as the wages plus the tips received equal at least the minimum wage, the employee retains all tips, and the employee customarily receives more than \$30.00 a month in tips. The tip credit is equal to the State minimum wage, less \$3.63. Thus, the tip credit increases as the

minimum wage increases, and the wage paid by employers to tipped employees remains \$3.63, as long as their wages plus tips equal the minimum wage. The State and local governments are not considered employers under the tip credit provisions of the Maryland Wage and Hour Law.

If an employer pays less than the wages required, the employee may bring an action against the employer to recover (1) the difference between the wage paid to the employee and the wage required; (2) an additional amount equal to the difference as liquidated damages; and (3) legal fees. The court must award these differences in wages, damages, and counsel fees if the court determines that an employee is entitled to recovery. However, if an employer shows to the satisfaction of the court that the employer acted in good faith and reasonably believed that the wages paid to the employee were not less than the required wages, then the court must award liquidated damages of an amount less than the difference in wages or no liquidated damages.

A person who violates the Maryland Wage and Hour Law is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction is subject to a fine of up to \$1,000.

#### *Federal Fair Labor Standards Act*

With some exceptions, similar to State law, FLSA requires that workers be paid a minimum hourly wage and that overtime compensation be paid to employees who work more than 40 hours in a week.

**Background:** As of January 2018, as shown in **Exhibit 1**, 29 states, including Maryland, and the District of Columbia mandate a minimum wage higher than the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour, with rates ranging from \$0.25 to \$5.25 above the federal rate. Eight of these states (Alaska, Florida, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, Ohio, and South Dakota) automatically increased their minimum wage rate based on the cost of living. Five states had no mandated minimum wage, another 2 had a minimum wage set lower than the federal minimum wage, and the remaining 14 states used the federal minimum wage. Unless a state has a higher minimum wage rate, the federal minimum wage rate applies.

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**Exhibit 1**  
**States with Higher than Federal Minimum Wage, as of January 2018**

<u>State</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Rate</u>
District of Columbia	\$12.50	<b>Maryland</b>	<b>\$9.25</b>
Washington	11.50	Michigan	9.25
California	11.00	Nebraska	9.00
Massachusetts	11.00	South Dakota	8.85
Arizona	10.50	West Virginia	8.75
Vermont	10.50	New Jersey	8.60
New York	10.40	Arkansas	8.50
Oregon	10.25	Montana	8.30
Colorado	10.20	Ohio	8.30
Connecticut	10.10	Delaware	8.25
Hawaii	10.10	Florida	8.25
Rhode Island	10.10	Illinois	8.25
Maine	10.00	Nevada	8.25
Alaska	9.84	Missouri	7.85
Minnesota	9.65	New Mexico	7.50

Source: U.S. Department of Labor

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*Local Jurisdiction Labor Laws*

Montgomery and Prince George’s counties have local minimum wage laws of \$11.50 per hour. The county minimum wages for Montgomery and Prince George’s counties do not apply to an employee who is exempt from the minimum wage requirements of the Maryland Wage and Hour Law or the federal FLSA or to an employee who is younger than age 19 and is employed no more than 20 hours in a week. Montgomery County passed [legislation](#) in 2017 to gradually increase its minimum wage so that employers with at least 51 employees are required to pay a minimum wage of \$15.00 per hour effective July 1, 2021; mid-sized employers are required to pay a minimum wage rate of \$15.00 per hour effective July 1, 2023; and employers with less than 11 employees are required to pay a minimum wage of \$15.00 per hour effective July 1, 2024, and the county indexes the minimum wage rates to inflation. An employer may pay a wage equal to 85% of the county minimum wage to an employee younger than age 20 for the first six months that the employee is employed.

Baltimore City enacted a city minimum wage rate in 1964, which was challenged in the State Court of Appeals in *Mayor of Baltimore v. Sitnick*, 254 Md. 303, 255 A.2d 376 (1969). The

court found that the State's minimum wage rate did not preempt Baltimore's minimum wage law since Baltimore's law supplemented the State law by setting a higher rate. Baltimore City still has its own minimum wage statute with an enforcement commission, which currently enforces the State minimum wage rate in the city.

### *Minimum Wage Effects on the Economy*

There is much debate on how raising the minimum wage affects the economy. Positive impacts on the economy may include (1) increases in personal income; (2) decreases in employee turnover; (3) increases in local consumption; (4) higher labor force participation rates; (5) decreases in social welfare costs; and (6) higher levels of technological development, investment, and productivity.

However, on the downside, raising the minimum wage may (1) decrease demand for labor; (2) increase inflation from employers passing higher employee costs onto the consumer; (3) cause wage compression; (4) reduce local competitiveness; and (5) have disemployment effects. The disemployment effects happen when businesses hire fewer low-wage workers in response to an increase in the minimum wage; benefits to low-wage workers from increased wages may be offset by a reduction in hours worked or increased unemployment.

**State Revenues:** General fund tax revenues may increase minimally from increasing the State's minimum wage beginning in fiscal 2020. Individuals earning minimum wage likely have low, if any, State income tax liability so raising the minimum wage only has a minimal effect on State income tax revenues. Any increase in personal income tax revenues is likely offset from diminished revenues from businesses with higher payroll expenses and from potentially a decrease in demand for labor. Given that raising the minimum wage boosts the purchasing power of minimum wage workers and generates new consumer spending, general fund sales tax revenues may increase minimally.

General fund revenues may increase minimally from a higher number of penalties paid by employers who are found by the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (DLLR) to be in violation of the Maryland Wage and Hour Law.

As noted below, federal fund revenues may increase to cover a small portion of the additional payroll costs incurred by the State.

**State Expenditures:** The bill's effects on minimum wage payments by the State and on administrative costs are addressed separately in this section.

### *Minimum Wage Increase*

Beginning July 1, 2019, the State minimum wage rate is indexed to inflation based on the CPI for the Washington-Baltimore metropolitan area or a successor index published by BLS. Based on historical data of that CPI, the Department of Legislative Services assumes the State minimum wage rate grows by 1.7% annually, so that it is \$10.27 in fiscal 2020, \$10.45 in fiscal 2021, \$10.62 in fiscal 2022, and \$10.80 in fiscal 2023. However, the CPI for the Washington-Baltimore metropolitan area will no longer be available beginning in 2018 but, instead, is replaced with two new CPIs that cover two different regions of the State that are both currently included in the CPI for the Washington-Baltimore metropolitan area. It is unknown which CPI will be selected under the bill, so the actual fiscal impact could vary depending on which new CPI is used.

State expenditures (all funds) increase significantly as a result of incrementally indexing the State minimum wage to inflation beginning July 1, 2019; **Exhibit 2** displays some of the additional wages that must be paid to State employees in fiscal 2020 through 2023 under the bill. However, some agencies are not impacted by indexing the State minimum wage to inflation. For example, the Judiciary and the Maryland Department of Transportation currently pay employees above the anticipated minimum wage rate of \$10.80 per hour for fiscal 2023.

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**Exhibit 2**  
**Effect of Indexing the Minimum Wage to Inflation on State Employees**  
**Fiscal 2020-2023**

<b><u>Additional Staffing Costs</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2020</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2021</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2022</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2023</u></b>
Senior Citizen Aides	\$32,656	\$67,522	\$100,451	\$135,317
SPMS Contractual Employees	13,975	30,490	47,926	67,511
SPS University Employees	350,037	725,492	1,083,360	1,469,930
USM Employees	107,226	276,354	451,737	665,262
DLS Employees	30,000	60,000	90,000	120,000
<b>Increase in Expenditures</b>	<b>\$533,894</b>	<b>\$1,159,858</b>	<b>\$1,773,474</b>	<b>\$2,458,020</b>
Federal Fund Revenues	32,656	67,522	100,451	135,317
<b>Net Increase in Expenditures</b>	<b>\$501,238</b>	<b>\$1,092,336</b>	<b>\$1,673,023</b>	<b>\$2,322,703</b>

DLS: Department of Legislative Services  
SPMS: State Personnel Management System  
SPS: Statewide personnel system  
USM: University System of Maryland

Source: Department of Legislative Services

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Current law has the minimum wage rate set at \$10.10 per hour beginning in fiscal 2019, so State expenditures increase by \$0.5 million in fiscal 2020, which is the total wage effect of the difference between \$10.10 and the \$10.27 wage rate established under the bill. Expenditures in future years are calculated based on the difference between the \$10.10 minimum wage rate that will be required under current law versus the rates under the bill, so, by fiscal 2023, State expenditures increase by \$2.5 million. These costs do not take into account any wage adjustments to internal salary ladders or increases in other compensation tied to wages. The State may increase wages for an employee who currently earns just above \$10.27 per hour in fiscal 2020 or just above \$10.80 per hour in fiscal 2023 and has more job responsibilities than a minimum wage employee. Any such wage adjustments further increase the State’s expenditures, potentially significantly.

*Administrative Expenses*

The bill creates additional responsibilities for DLLR’s Division of Labor and Industry by providing for annual increases in the minimum wage based on inflation. These changes are expected to increase the number of inquiries and complaints related to payment of the minimum wage. DLLR cannot fully absorb the additional workload within existing resources and requires an additional staff person to respond to the increase in inquiries and complaints prompted by the bill.

Thus, general fund expenditures increase for DLLR by \$49,262 in fiscal 2019, which accounts for the bill’s October 1, 2018 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of hiring one DLLR wage and hour investigator to conduct outreach, respond to inquiries, investigate complaints, and enforce the new requirements. It includes a salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

Regular Position	1
Regular Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$38,860
Operating Expenses	<u>10,402</u>
<b>DLLR FY 2019 State Expenditures</b>	<b>\$49,262</b>

Future year expenditures reflect a full salary with annual increases and employee turnover and ongoing operating expenses.

**Local Expenditures:** Expenditures may increase beginning in fiscal 2020 for some local governments to pay employees (typically part-time or contractual employees) the minimum wage rate indexed to inflation. Other local governments may not be greatly impacted, such as Montgomery and Prince George’s counties since they currently have local minimum wage laws of \$11.50 per hour.

**Small Business Effect:** Small businesses in the State that employ minimum wage or low-wage workers experience increases in their labor costs due to the bill. To the extent that higher wages reduce turnover and increase worker productivity, businesses are less affected by the bill. Additionally, minimum wage workers tend to have a low saving rate, so increasing their wages may lead to additional consumer spending for small businesses.

**Additional Comments:** Beginning July 1, 2019, the State minimum wage rate is indexed to inflation based on the CPI for the Washington-Baltimore metropolitan area or a successor index published by BLS. However, [BLS](#) is revising the CPI geographic sample. The CPI for the Washington-Baltimore metropolitan area will no longer be available beginning in 2018 but, instead, is replaced with two new CPIs: a CPI for the Baltimore metropolitan area and a CPI for the Washington metropolitan area. Both indexes contain Maryland counties. The CPI for the Baltimore metropolitan area contains Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Howard, and Queen Anne's counties. The CPI for the Washington metropolitan area contains Calvert, Charles, Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties.

[BLS](#) notes that metropolitan area indexes have a relatively small sample size and, therefore, are subject to substantially larger sampling errors. Metropolitan area and other subcomponents of the national indexes (regions, size-classes) often exhibit greater volatility than the national index. BLS recommends that users adopt the U.S. city average CPI for use in escalator clauses.

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### Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Prince George's and Montgomery counties; Maryland Association of Counties; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); University System of Maryland; Department of Budget and Management; Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation; Maryland Department of Transportation; U.S. Department of Labor; Department of Legislative Services

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