

# Missouri Legislators' Interference Has Cost St. Louis Workers at Least \$35 Million in Long-Overdue Raises

In August 2015, St. Louis approved a local ordinance raising the city's minimum wage. The ordinance was a response to the fact that Missouri's minimum wage was just \$7.65 and had increased only 40 cents in the previous seven years. The legislature reacted by passing a new law attempting to ban cities from raising the minimum wage. Last month, however, a unanimous Missouri Supreme Court ruled that state law did not prevent the St. Louis minimum wage law from taking effect, meaning that at least 35,000 workers in the city would be entitled to a raise to \$10 an hour this year—and to \$11 in 2018. Now, the Missouri legislature is attempting once again to undermine local powers and pass a new law blocking the raise.

Drawing on data from the [Economic Policy Institute](#), this policy brief estimates the pay raise that St. Louis's lowest-paid workers have been denied to date by the legislature. It finds that **a total of 35,287 St. Louis workers have been denied raises totaling \$34,828,105** between October 2015 and March 2017. It also finds that **St. Louis's lowest paid workers—those earning between the Missouri minimum wage of \$7.65 and \$8.25—would have received an average raise of \$2,394 per year.** That's a huge loss for workers whose annual incomes average about \$12,500 per year.

It also provides demographic data on the ages and family status of workers denied raises. It estimates that **76% of workers denied raises are older than 25** and **37% are older than 40.** It also estimates that **31% of children in the city are in households with a worker denied a raise.**

Total Raises Lost by St. Louis Workers (through March 2017)	
Number of Workers Losing Raises	Total Raises Lost
35,287	\$34,828,105

<b>Average Raise Lost by Lowest-Paid St. Louis Workers (earning between \$7.65 &amp; \$8.25)</b>	
\$2,394	

<b>Age of St. Louis Workers Denied Raises</b>	
Older Than 25	76%
Older Than 40	37%

<b>Family Demographics of St. Louis Workers Denied Raises</b>	
Share of St. Louis Children Who Live in a Household with a Worker Denied a Raise	31%

#### **Notes on Methodology**

##### **1. Sources for Wage Impact Date**

U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates  
 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, OES

##### **2. Sources for Demographic Impact Data**

Economic Policy Institute & Oxfam, Few Rewards, Missouri Scorecard, available at <https://policy-practice.oxfamamerica.org/work/poverty-in-the-us/low-wage-map/scorecard/?state=MO>