

House Passes Minimum Wage Increase

Press Release

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Economic Justice: House Passes Minimum Wage Increase

New York — Ending ten years of inaction, the House of Representatives voted to raise the [federal minimum wage](#) for the first time since 1997. If approved by the Senate, the federal minimum wage would increase to \$7.25 by July 2009.

This long overdue federal action came after [twenty-eight states](#) had stopped waiting for Washington and raised the minimum wage on their own. In the November election, voters in six more states overwhelmingly approved minimum wage [ballot initiatives](#) supported by the Brennan Center and allies, helping place decent wages on the national agenda.

“The new Congress gets it that working families are struggling,” said Paul Sonn, a deputy director at the Brennan Center. “This is an important first step towards catching the minimum wage up to where it

used to be. The next challenge will be fully restoring the federal minimum wage over the next several years.”

After the new increase phases in by July 2009, 12 to 15 states will still have substantially higher minimum wages than the federal government. Ten states have adopted automatic annual cost-of-living adjustments to their minimum wages to protect working families from falling behind. And more than 30 states have raised the minimum wage for tipped workers – a reform Congress has yet to tackle.