

Brennan Center Analysis Leads Missouri Governor to Order Minimum Wage Increase

For Immediate Release

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St. Louis - Missouri Governor Matt Blunt last night overruled his state labor department and ordered that tens of thousands of tipped workers across the state receive the minimum wage increase that Missouri voters approved last November. The administration's reversal came after the Brennan Center issued an analysis demonstrating that the administration's attempt to block the minimum wage increase for tipped workers was illegal.

"The Blunt administration has finally realized that they can't roll-back the minimum wage increase approved by 76% of Missouri voters in November through a back-door legal maneuver. Thousands of Missourians who work for tips and struggle to make ends meet will finally get the raise they should have had in January," said Paul Sonn, co-director of the

Brennan Center's Economic Justice Project.

Last year, Missourians voted overwhelmingly to raise the state minimum wage in a campaign assisted by the Brennan Center. Missouri's minimum wage has long required that tipped workers receive a base wage of at least 50% of the minimum wage, with the balance provided in the form of tips. Nothing in the minimum wage ballot initiative changed that requirement. But the Blunt administration was persuaded by the restaurant industry to try to do an end run around the voter-approved raise by incorrectly telling employers that Missouri's minimum wage requires no base wage at all for tipped workers.

Last week the Brennan Center, joined by a group of Missouri law professors, released its legal analysis revealing that the attempted wage roll-back was illegal. The administration's effort to block the raise sparked a state-wide campaign led by Give Missourians a Raise and Jobs with Justice to organize thousands of restaurant workers to protest the attempted roll-back.