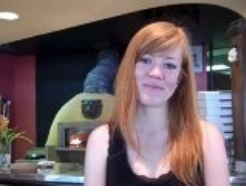


EIGHT STATES RAISE THE MINIMUM-WAGE



Members of eight states will see pay their pay check grow by hundreds of dollars annually thanks to the raise. These eight states are used to seeing an increase, because of each state's law to increase minimum-wage rates on an annual basis. Montana, Washington, Oregon, Ohio, Arizona, Vermont, and Florida will all increase their minimum-wage rates during the year 2012. Five of the states have already announced what raise the workers can expect next year. Currently, the raise ranges from 28 cents more per hour to 37 cents more. This tallies to an annual raise between \$582 and \$770 for full-time employees. Washington has given the largest pay raise for the 2012 year, offering employees a minimum-wage of \$9.04 per hour. This does not include the wage increases from Vermont, Arizona, and Florida, who have not yet announced their planned increases. However they have said to expect it within the upcoming weeks. These states find it necessary to annually raise the minimum-wage due to the ever-increasing price of inflation in the nation and throughout the world. This raises cost of living prices, making everyday necessities like food, clothing and shelter more expensive to purchase. Inflation has caused the people's income to decrease by 7% over a period of 10 years. This accounts for the \$49,445 annual average for middle-income Americans. The federal minimum wage, which sits at \$7.25 per hour, will only give a full time worker \$15,000 per year. If this minimum wage was set in places like Washington state, the residents there would not have enough money to live decently at all. In fact, for a family of four, this number falls below the poverty rate throughout the United States. Currently, 18 different states enforce a statewide minimum wage that surpasses the federal wage. The federal wage does not account for the price of rising inflation from a year to year basis. Although it increased in 2009, citizens may begin to push for another increase in federal minimum-wage within the next year, while others may begin pushing their respective states to enforce an annual minimum-wage like many other states currently do. Minimum-wage holds great importance during a shaky economy. Most jobs tend to lean toward the low-paying end of the spectrum. During 2010, 76% of jobs created from January to August offered a low- to mid-paying salary for the new employee, ranging from \$8.92 to \$15 per hour. This number falls significantly below the nationwide hour wage averaging at \$22.60. While minimum-wage rises in eight different states, it should leave those members of other states planning how to convince their state government to follow the example of these eight. Raising wages to account for inflation will leave less families struggling to simply put food on the table. If they have extra money, they will be more inclined to purchase more luxury items. That, in turn, will boost the economy and enable businesses to pay the higher rates with ease.