

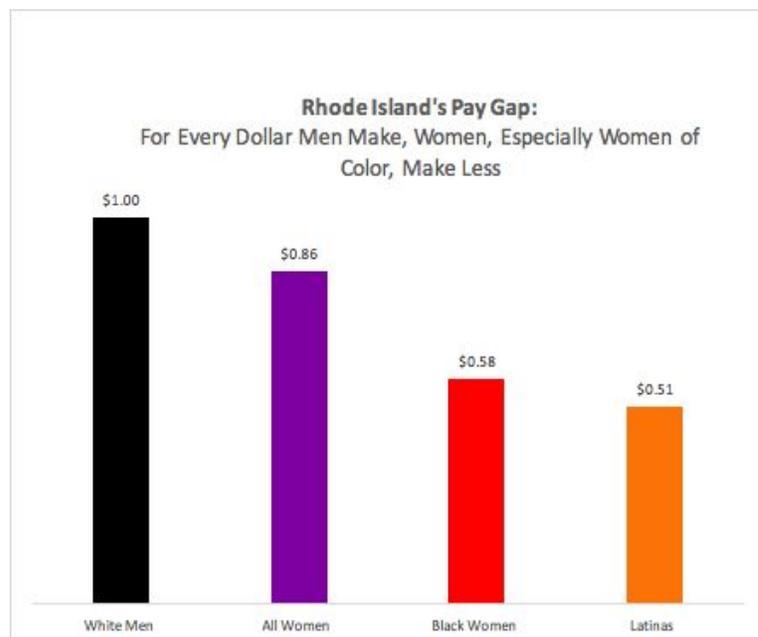
FIGHT FOR \$15 AND FAIR PAY

Working women and men in Rhode Island are struggling. **Our current minimum wage of \$10.10 falls well below what even a single person needs to meet her basic needs.**¹ No one should work full time and still live in poverty, and yet nearly one in five Rhode Islanders still make less than \$15 an hour.² Worse still, the impact of low wages falls hardest on people of color and on women.

In Rhode Island today, a woman working full time still makes only 87 cents to the dollar that her male counterpart makes.³ Women of color are even more deeply affected. Rhode Island Black women make 58 percent of what their white male counterparts make; for Latinas the number is even lower—51 percent.⁴ This pay gap fluctuates, but persists across generation, sector, and educational level.⁵ It is also driven by the fact that women and people of color often work in caring and service jobs where wages are lowest.

The wage gap has serious lifelong effects on women and the families that their wages support. On average, Rhode Island working women each lose more than \$7,000 per year to the wage gap—think about what a difference that money would make to working families!

If we are serious about economic equality for women and people of color and supporting working families, we need to move urgently both to raise the minimum wage and to address the practices that perpetuate discrimination and fuel the pay gap.



Women, people of color, and their families need a higher minimum wage and fairer set of pay practices at every wage level.

¹ RI Standard of Need. Economic Progress Institute

² State Tables of \$15 an hour Minimum Wage Impact. Economic Policy Institute

³ Status of Working Women. Economic Progress Institute

⁴ Rhode Island Women and the Wage Gap. National Partnership for Women and Families.
<http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/workplace-fairness/fair-pay/4-2017-ri-wage-gap.pdf>

⁵ The Simple Truth About the Gender Pay Gap. American Association of University Women.
<https://www.aauw.org/research/the-simple-truth-about-the-gender-pay-gap/>

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\$15 Minimum Wage: What the bill does

This bill creates a minimum wage that's consistent with the actual cost of living, raising the wage gradually and predictably.

1. **Increases the minimum wage to \$15 by 2023.** The minimum wage would rise to \$11 on January 1st, 2019 and then by one dollar per year until it reaches \$15.
2. **Indexes the minimum wage to inflation.** Once the minimum wage reaches \$15, it is indexed to inflation, so that its values does not decline as the cost of living increases.
3. **Eliminates the unfair sub-minimum wage for tipped workers by 2028.** The bill phases out this low wage (currently less than \$4 an hour) for those making tips.
4. **Strengthens enforcement.** The measure clarifies and increases recourse options for employees who have been wrongly paid less than the minimum wage.

Fair Pay Act: What the bill does

This bill helps to close the wage gap by clarifying and strengthening existing equal pay protections and by eliminating practices that perpetuate the pay gap.

1. **Prohibits employers from paying workers differently, including by sex, race, or for other protected classes.** The measure makes it illegal to pay workers less than their white, male colleagues without a clearly documented difference in skills.
2. **Clarifies comparable work.** The bill makes clear that workers need to be paid equally for "substantially similar" work even if every detail is not the same.
3. **Bans policies that prevent workers from discussing their pay with each other.** Women, people of color, and other classes protected by this bill usually find out about pay discrimination only by discussing pay with co-workers.
4. **Removes past salary history as a consideration.** Discrimination is perpetuated over time by employers relying on past salaries, rather than skills and value, to determine current pay. This bill bans the use of past salary history, changing the focus to the value of an employee in her own right.
5. **Requires disclosure of salary range.** Often women and people of color make less than they should because they do not know that others in their job are making more and don't ask for more. This bill requires an employer to notify an employee of the range of pay for their position.

The growing Fight for \$15 and Fair Pay coalition supporting these bills includes: Center for Justice, Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Economic Progress Institute, Jobs with Justice, Planned Parenthood, RI NOW, Rhode Island Food Bank, SEIU 1199, SEIU 32BJ, Teamsters Local 251, Women's Fund of RI & Working Families.