

AFFORDABLE

RHODE ISLAND

FAST FACTS: The Case for H7769

Raising the RI Minimum Wage to \$20/hr by 2027

“Work should be a bridge out of poverty, not a treadmill that never stops.”

Rhode Island is facing a **cost-of-living crisis**. While wages have increased incrementally, they have not kept pace with the skyrocketing costs of housing, food, and childcare. **H7769** is a necessary adjustment to ensure that work actually pays in the Ocean State.

1. The “Survival Gap” in Rhode Island

The gap between the current minimum wage and a true "living wage" is a chasm that Rhode Island workers cannot cross without working dangerous amounts of overtime.

Metric	Current 2026 (\$16)	Proposed H7769 (\$20)	MIT Living Wage
Hourly Rate	\$16.00	\$20.00	\$25.01
Annual (40hr/wk)	\$33,280	\$41,600	\$52,020
Hours needed to survive	62.5 hrs/wk	50 hrs/wk	40 hrs/wk

Bottom Line: Even at \$20/hr, a worker is still **\$5.00/hr short** of a basic living wage for a single adult. Anything less than \$20/hr effectively mandates a 60+ hour work week.

2. Can Families Survive in RI?

For households with children, the math becomes impossible at \$16/hour.

- **Single Parent (1 Child):** Needs **\$45.48/hr** to be self-sufficient.
- **Two Working Parents (2 Children):** Each needs **\$31.13/hr**.
- **The Result:** 51% of RI renters are **cost-burdened** (spending >30% of income on rent), and 38% of households are **food insecure**.

3. Caring for the Caregivers

The very people we rely on to keep our society running are the ones most likely to live in poverty.

- **Home Care & Healthcare Aides:** Average wage is ~\$19.50/hr.
- **Childcare Workers:** Average wage is ~\$17.00/hr.
- **The Irony:** These "essential" workers often cannot afford the childcare or healthcare services they provide to others.

4. Economic Benefits of \$20/hr

- **Local Spending:** Low-wage workers spend nearly every dollar they earn back into the local economy (groceries, car repairs, local retail).
- **Reduced Turnover:** Higher wages lead to better employee retention, saving RI small businesses thousands in hiring and training costs.
- **Lower Safety Net Costs:** When people earn a living wage, the burden on state-funded assistance programs (SNAP, Medicaid) decreases.

Support H7769. Pass a \$20 Minimum Wage.