

## Kentucky House Bill 1 Seeks To Raise Minimum Wage

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The 2014 General Assembly is underway and, as always, we will be closely monitoring the proposed legislation. This week, we will take a look at two bills that could greatly impact employers in the Commonwealth.

First up is House Bill 1, a proposal introduced by House Speaker, Greg Stumbo, to raise Kentucky's minimum wage. The designation as House Bill 1 reflects a consensus among the Democratic Party that this is the House's primary legislative effort during the 2014 session. As proposed, House Bill 1 would amend current law by raising the state minimum wage from \$7.25 per hour to \$10.10 per hour over a three-year period. The bill proposes graduated increases to \$8.10 per hour on July 1, 2014, \$9.15 per hour on July 1, 2015, and finally to \$10.10 per hour on July 1, 2016.

Kentucky last raised its minimum wage in 2009 in conjunction with changes to the federal minimum wage. Employee wages have once again become a hot legislative issue, with thirteen states providing pay raises to minimum-wage workers as of January, 2014.

House Bill 1 tracks a national effort by the Democratic Party to **raise the minimum wage as job growth**, though increasing, remains concentrated in low-wage industries. President Obama and many in Congress have advocated for wages to be raised and then tied to an inflation index so that they more directly track increases in the cost of living. Opponents argue that minimum wage increases hurt private employers' bottom line, and could result in layoffs and depressed job growth as employers find ways to increase profitability without raising prices to consumers.

It is too early to predict how the bill will fare this session, but a [poll conducted by the Public Policy Polling](#) in December found that 54% of likely Kentucky voters supported increasing the minimum wage to \$10.00 per hour. If you are a business owner and have strong feelings regarding the proposed minimum wage increase, contact your state Senator or Representative today.

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