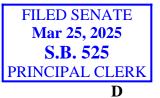
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA SESSION 2025



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SENATE BILL DRS15172-LRa-97B

Short Title:	Living Wage Guarantee Act.	(Public)
Sponsors:	Senators Theodros, Waddell, and Applewhite (Primary Sponsors).	
Referred to:		

1	A BILL TO BE ENTITLED			
2	AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A STATE MINIMUM WAGE OF FIFTEEN DOLLARS PER			
3	HOUR, INCORPORATE AUTOMATIC INFLATION ADJUSTMENTS, AND ENSURE			
4	ECONOMIC STABILITY FOR WORKERS IN NORTH CAROLINA.			
5	Whereas, the current minimum wage in North Carolina has remained stagnant at			
6	\$7.25 per hour since 2009, failing to keep pace with rising living costs; and			
7	Whereas, increasing the minimum wage to \$15 per hour will enhance financial			
8	security for low-income workers, reduce poverty, and boost consumer spending, benefiting the			
9	State's economy; and			
10	Whereas, automatic inflation adjustments will prevent wage stagnation and ensure			
11	that earnings maintain their real value over time; and			
12	Whereas, Article I, Section 1, of the North Carolina Constitution affirms the right of			
13	all citizens to enjoy the fruits of their labor, which includes fair compensation; Now, therefore,			
14	The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:			
15	SECTION 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Living Wage			
16	Guarantee Act."			
17	SECTION 2.(a) G.S. 95-25.3 reads as rewritten:			
18	"§ 95-25.3. Minimum wage.wages; automatic cost-of-living adjustments.			
19	(a) Every <u>employer employer</u> , except a small business covered under subsection (a1) of			
20	this section, shall pay to each employee who in any workweek performs any work, wages of at			
21	least six dollars and fifteen cents (\$6.15) per hour or the minimum wage the amount set forth in			
22	paragraph 1 of section 6(a) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 U.S.C. 206(a)(1), as that wage			
23	may change from time to time, whichever is higher, except as otherwise provided in this			
24	section.or wages of at least fifteen dollars (\$15.00) per hour, whichever is higher, effective			
25	January 1, 2026.			
26	(a1) A small business shall pay to each employee who in any workweek performs any			
27	work, wages of at least the amount set forth in paragraph 1 of section 6(a) of the Fair Labor			
28	Standards Act, 29 U.S.C. § 206(a)(1), as that wage may change from time to time, or the wage			
29	set forth in this subsection, whichever is higher:			
30	(1) Effective January 1, 2026, wages of at least twelve dollars (\$12.00) per hour.			
31	(2) Effective January 1, 2027, wages of at least thirteen dollars and fifty cents			
32	$\frac{(\$13.50) \text{ per hour.}}{12000}$			
33	(3) Effective January 1, 2028, wages of at least fifteen dollars (\$15.00) per hour.			
34	(4) Effective January 1, 2028, and annually thereafter, the amount determined by			
35	the Commissioner of Labor under subsection (a2) of this section.			



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1	For the purposes of this section, a "small business" is defined as a person doing business in				
2	this State having fewer than 10 employees.				
3	(a2) <u>Beginning October 1, 2028, and on each October 1</u>	thereafter, the Commissioner of			
4	Labor shall calculate an adjusted minimum wage rate indexed to the percentage increase in the				
5	5 <u>Consumer Price Index (All 29 Urban Consumers), CPI-U, or its successor index, as calculated</u>				
6	by the U.S. Department of Labor for the 12-month period precede	ng the previous October 1. Each			
7	7 <u>adjusted minimum wage rate calculated shall be published on October 1 and take effect on the</u>				
8	following January 1.				
9					
10	SECTION 2.(b) G.S. 95-25.22 is amended by addir	0			
11	"(a2) Any employer who violates the provisions of G.S. 95	25.13 or any rule adopted under			
12	that section shall be:				
13	(1) Liable to the employee or employees affected				
14	damages, including, but not limited to, back p	ay and benefits plus interest and			
15	reasonable attorneys' fees and costs.				
16	(2) <u>Subject to fines and other remedies as dete</u>	ermined by the North Carolina			
17	Department of Labor.				
18	(a3) Employees shall have the right to file complaints	-			
19	regarding noncompliance. Employers shall not retaliate against e	mployees who assert their rights			
20	under this section."				
21	SECTION 3. Effective July 1, 2025, there is approp				
22	the Department of Labor the sum of ten million dollars (\$10,000				
23 24	Small Business Assistance Program (Program). The Program shall: (i) provide temporary				
24 25	financial support to small businesses transitioning to the new wage requirements and (ii) engage				
23 26	in outreach about the new minimum wage law. Federal workforce development funds may also				
20 27	be used for this purpose. Financial support through the Program shall be made available for				
27	businesses with 20 or fewer employees for a period of up to two years. The Department of Labor shall develop rules for the administration of the Program.				
28 29	SECTION 4. Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes				
29 30	law.	ct is effective when it becomes			
50	10 W.				