



ANTHONY G. BROWN, MARYLAND ATTORNEY GENERAL

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Media Contacts:
press@oag.state.md.us
410-576-7009

Attorney General Brown Joins Coalition Supporting Fair Wages For Federal Contract Workers

BALTIMORE, MD (August 29, 2023) – Attorney General Brown today joined a coalition of 23 attorneys general in filing an [amicus brief](#) supporting the federal government’s actions to increase the minimum wage to \$15 per hour for certain federal contractors. The policy was first enacted by presidential executive order in April 2021, and then implemented by the U.S. Department of Labor in November 2021 in the final rule, “Increasing the Minimum Wage for Federal Contract Workers.”

The coalition submitted the brief in *Nebraska v. Su*, a case challenging the increase in minimum wage requirements for federal contract workers. The coalition argues that both the president and the Department of Labor acted well within their authority when implementing the policies to ensure federal contract workers are paid fair living wages. In addition, the coalition argues that the minimum wage increase is fully supported by practical evidence and is consistent with state and local experiences in raising the minimum wage for contractors.

“Hard-working federal contractors shouldn’t be left behind in the movement toward fair, living wages for all. It’s time that the federal government pays its contractors what they deserve and what is fair,” **said Attorney General Brown**. “Higher wages increase equity among workers, reduce poverty, and help ease income inequality. This proposed increase is good for workers and their families, good for business, and good for the economy.”

At issue in the underlying lawsuit is an executive order and follow-on rule increasing the minimum wage for certain federal contractors, which had been set at \$10.10 per hour since 2014. A separate coalition of states, including Nebraska, filed a lawsuit challenging the increase and sought a preliminary injunction. The district court denied the injunction and dismissed the lawsuit upon concluding that the executive order and Department of Labor’s rule were lawful exercises of executive authority. The states have appealed that decision to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit.

In the brief, the coalition argues that the appellate court should affirm the lower court’s decision. The coalition points to the ways an increased minimum wage benefits employers, employees and consumers, citing studies and reports demonstrating that an increased minimum wage leads to

improved morale and productivity, reduced turnover and absenteeism, as well as improved income equality and decreased poverty for federal contractual workers. Those benefits in turn, lead to improved service and enhance consumer experiences.

Effective January 1, 2024, Maryland's minimum wage will be raised to \$15.00 per hour.

Joining Attorney General Brown in filing the brief were attorneys general from California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin.

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