

January 4, 2013 | NY Times | Editorial
And at the Bottom of the Wage Scale...

Nearly a million low-wage workers in 10 states will get a modest raise this year. In Rhode Island, a new law has raised the state's minimum wage by 35 cents an hour, to \$7.75, which will work out to an average annual raise of \$510 for 11,000 Rhode Islanders. In nine other states — Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Missouri, Montana, Ohio, Oregon, Vermont and Washington — laws that peg the minimum wage to inflation will result in increases of 10 cents to 15 cents an hour, for hourly wages ranging from \$7.35 in Missouri to \$9.19 in Washington.

By contrast, the federal minimum wage has been stuck at \$7.25 an hour since 2009. In all, 19 states and the District of Columbia set their minimums above that level. But state efforts are no substitute for a higher federal minimum because the ability to earn a minimally acceptable income should not depend on where a worker lives.

Will Congress finally raise the federal minimum wage this year? It would be the least that lawmakers could do. In the fiscal cliff deal, lawmakers locked in big tax breaks for wealthy investors and for heirs of multimillion-dollar estates. At the same time, they allowed the payroll tax cut for low- and middle-income taxpayers to expire, without enacting new provisions to ease the blow. The lowest-paid workers will be hit the hardest. In the states that raised their minimum wage this year, much of the increase will be eaten up by the higher payroll tax. In the other states, paychecks will simply be smaller.

Efforts to raise the minimum invariably run into arguments that employers, especially small businesses, cannot afford to pay a higher wage. But the evidence shows that most low-wage employees work for large companies, which have largely recovered from the recession and have reinstated generous pay packages for executives. As for low-wage workers at small businesses, many are waitresses and other "tipped" workers for whom the federal minimum wage is \$2.13 an hour, where it has been since 1991. Clearly, there is ample room for an increase.

A related argument is that a higher minimum wage destroys jobs, especially employment for teenagers. But research shows that most low-wage workers are over the age of 20 and suggests that paying them a higher wage could actually create jobs by bolstering consumer spending.

A higher minimum wage is also an obvious way to counter the accelerating trend toward low-wage work and growing income inequality. For decades, various forces, including the decline in unionization and the global competition for jobs, have pushed down wages in the United States. But the situation has become worse in the last few years, as most of the middle-wage jobs lost during the recession have been replaced with lower-paid work.

Raising the minimum wage is always a fight. Congress has **approved** legislation to do so only three times in the last 30 years. President Obama **promised** to take on this fight back in 2008, when he called for a federal minimum wage of \$9.50 an hour by 2011, **indexed** to inflation. It is past time to keep the promise.

.....
Number the paragraphs of this article. There are 7 paragraphs. Complete the following tasks:

Paragraph #1- What is the purpose of the parenthesis in this paragraph? Identify and tally the verbs in this paragraph. How many action verbs are there? How many verbs of being are there? How many helping verbs are there?

Paragraph #2 – Identify the sentence types for the three sentences in this paragraph. Compound, complex, compound-complex, or simple. Where are the prepositional phrases in the first two sentences?

Paragraph #3 – Identify and explain one Aristotelian appeal in this paragraph.

Paragraphs # 4-6 – What are the arguments and counter-arguments presented in these paragraphs?

Paragraph # 7 – Identify the part of speech of each of the bolded words.