



OUR INSIGHTS

Rhode Island Raises Minimum Wage Again: Now \$9.60 per Hour

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On June 22, 2015, Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo signed into law another increase to the state's minimum wage. This marks the [fourth straight year](#) that Rhode Island has raised its minimum wage. Effective January 1, 2016, the minimum wage will be \$9.60 per hour.

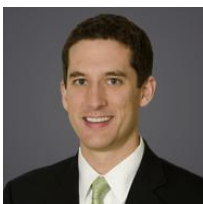
The new minimum wage rate matches that in Connecticut and Vermont. Barring any action in other states, only California (\$10.00), Massachusetts (\$10.00), and Alaska (\$9.75) will have higher rates for 2016. A small number of other states, including Washington, index their minimum wages to rise with the cost of living and thus may have similarly high rates.

There have also been efforts in the Rhode Island General Assembly to raise the minimum wage for tipped employees, which currently remains at \$2.89 per hour, and some lawmakers have pledged to continue those efforts. Rhode Island has not raised its "subminimum" wage in almost 20 years, but pending bills would do just that.

Unlike some other states that have passed laws raising the minimum wage in increments over a number of years, Rhode Island has taken a piecemeal approach, passing separate wage hikes each of the past four years. An increase in the minimum wage affects other wage-and-hour provisions in Rhode Island, including the requirement that an employer's highest biweekly payroll equal at least 200 percent of the state minimum wage in order for the employer to pay its employees on a biweekly basis. Employers that do not meet the 200 percent mark need to meet certain additional criteria to be eligible for biweekly pay. Rhode Island employers should continue to monitor changes in Rhode Island's minimum wage laws and ensure their compliance with the new rate for 2016.

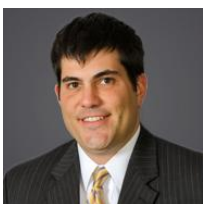
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Andrew Silvia is an associate in the Boston office, where he practices all aspects of employment litigation. Andrew has significant experience litigating matters in state and federal court, as well as before the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. In particular, Andrew has defended discrimination, retaliation, and whistleblower claims, wage-and-hour lawsuits (including claims for payment of overtime and violation of meal break or tip...

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