

Opportunity Wisconsin: One year since the House voted to give workers a raise, but President Trump stopped them

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NEENAH, Wis. — Tomorrow marks one year since the House of Representatives passed the Raise the Wage Act, which would gradually raise the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$15 per hour. As the legislation moved through Congress, President Trump swore to veto it should it reach his desk, essentially blocking a much-needed raise for more than 800,000 Wisconsin workers.

Because of policy choices like this, workers in the Badger State were struggling to make ends meet even before the pandemic. Now, not only are more than 800,000 Wisconsinites dealing with \$3 billion in lost wages, they are facing unprecedented unemployment, sickness, and even greater financial uncertainty.

“When President Trump blocked the Raise the Wage Act last year, he irreparably hurt working Wisconsinites — whose median wage, when adjusted for inflation, has remained nearly stagnant for the last forty years. The current median wage of Wisconsin’s workers is only 73 cents higher than it was in 1979. People could have been earning wages that actually cover expenses and leave room to save. That would have meant a world of difference for millions of us during this pandemic,” said Mark Westphal, Opportunity Wisconsin Steering Committee Member and President of the Fox Valley Area Labor Council. Instead, we’re struggling to make ends meet and living paycheck to paycheck if we are lucky enough to still have jobs. The president owes working class folks in Wisconsin a check for stifling our wage increases over this past year.”

Earlier this month, Opportunity Wisconsin released a [countdown clock](#) highlighting the impending [pandemic pay cut](#) that nearly 700,000 unemployed Wisconsin workers will face should President Trump fail to extend vital economic relief. As of today, the president has still vowed to block an extension. When the relief expires July 31, nearly 700,000 Wisconites will get a \$2,400 pay cut per month during a pandemic.