

Article

[mike bski](#)

[@BskiMike22802](#)



THE NEW PLANTATION

How the Left Uses Minimum Wage and Welfare to Keep People Dependent

START HERE. THIS IS PERSONAL.

I have stood in a classroom for sixteen-plus years trying to get kids -- real kids, not statistics -- to believe they have a future. Kids in a district that wrote them off before ninth grade. Before that, 23 years as an Army combat medic. Before that, a paramedic in Cleveland pulling overnight 12-hour shifts before my morning classes, then doing it all over again the next day. I raised four kids on a teacher's salary without debt.

So when politicians tell me raising the minimum wage is "for the workers"?

I do not get angry. I get amused. Then I drive past the McDonald's down the street -- the one that cannot fill its open positions -- and I think about New York City's new mayor, Zohran Mamdani, who has made the \$15 minimum wage the centerpiece of his entire political identity while simultaneously paying his own campaign staffer Shouval Snow as an **independent contractor**. Not an employee. A contractor. No benefits. No overtime protections. No employer-side payroll taxes. The very protections he screams about in every speech -- he structured his own shop to avoid them.

Meanwhile, that McDonald's I drive past? **HELP WANTED** signs in the window. Paying above minimum wage because the market demands it -- not because a politician

mandated it. And every person they hire is an actual employee with actual protections, not a contractor conveniently classified to save the boss money.

But please. Tell me more about living wages.

PART ONE: THEY BUILT IT TO EXCLUDE BLACK WORKERS

(Read the primary sources before you argue with me)

Here is what your history teacher never covered. The minimum wage was not designed to help low-wage workers. It was engineered -- by progressive economists, of all people -- to **price Black Americans, immigrants, and disabled people out of the labor market entirely.**

Not a fringe theory. Princeton economist Thomas Leonard documented this exhaustively. Academics in the early 1900s openly advocated for wage floors as a eugenic tool. Their language was 'unemployables.' When they said that, they meant Black workers. Union leaders at the time said it plainly -- minimum wage rules removed, and I am quoting directly, "**the incentive for employing the Negro.**" These were not obscure cranks. These were the intellectual founders of American progressivism.

The Davis-Bacon Act of 1931. Southern Democrats and northern unions pushed it to protect white construction workers from competing with Black laborers willing to work for less. No need to write 'exclude Black workers' in the text. A wage floor did the job with a veneer of neutrality.

The 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act -- the law that actually created the federal minimum wage -- excluded agricultural workers and domestic servants. Not an oversight. Historian Ira Katznelson documented extensively that these were the terms Southern Democrats demanded for their votes. That is where Black labor was concentrated in the Jim Crow South. Representative Martin Dies said it on the House floor without apology: "**you cannot prescribe the same wages for the Black man as the White man.**" The bill passed.

Milton Friedman -- Nobel Prize, economics -- called the minimum wage "**the most anti-Negro law on our statute books.**" 1966. Direct quote.

But sure. Tell me which party is the racist one.

PART TWO: THE MATH THEY DO NOT SHOW YOU

Every employer making a hire asks one question: is this person's labor worth what the law requires me to pay?

That is the whole equation. Everything else is noise.

At \$7.25, a teenager with zero experience and no resume is potentially worth hiring. They will make mistakes. They will be slow. The employer absorbs that cost while the kid learns how to show up on time, handle a difficult customer, function inside an organization. That first job -- even unglamorous, even minimum wage -- is the bottom rung of the ladder. It is how you build a resume. It is how you become employable for the next thing.

Push the floor to \$15 or \$20? Same teenager is now **UNEMPLOYABLE**. A full-time worker at \$15 costs an employer closer to \$42,000 annually when you factor in benefits, payroll taxes, workers comp, and liability. No rational business pays that for someone who needs six months of training before producing any real value. So they do not hire them. They cut hours. They automate. They do more with fewer people.

This is not a conservative opinion. It is arithmetic.

What the data actually shows:

A 2006 review of more than 100 minimum wage studies -- Neumark and Wascher -- found that **TWO-THIRDS showed negative employment effects**. Not a curated sample. Two-thirds of more than a hundred independent studies.

The University of Washington studied Seattle's \$15 rollout across all industries. When wages hit \$13, employers cut hours by **9%**. Low-skilled workers took home an average of **\$125 less per month**. The Washington Post called it "**bad news for liberals**." Their words.

South Carolina data: **15.5% employment reduction** for workers without a high school diploma. The people who most need that entry-level job lost it at the highest rate. Take a moment with that.

The CBO projected a \$17 federal minimum wage pushes **35,000 workers out of the labor force entirely**. Not into better jobs. Out. Onto welfare rolls. Into dependency. Right where, as we will get to, a certain political party needs them.

One more number: fewer than 1 in 1,000 workers actually earns the federal minimum wage today. 60% of those who do are under 25. These are not primary breadwinners being exploited. They are **young people on their first job**. The minimum wage hike does not lift them. It makes them unaffordable to hire.

The McDonald's angle nobody wants to discuss

McDonald's once published a budget guide for low-income employees. Genuinely trying to help. The problem? Their own sample showed a worker earning \$1,105 a month from McDonald's while estimated monthly expenses ran \$1,260. Their document **assumed**

you needed a second job. The health insurance they listed at \$20 a month? Their actual plan ran about \$14 a week. The numbers were not close.

What the document did not suggest was a government-mandated wage floor. You know why? Because the former CEO of CKE Restaurants -- Hardee's, Carl's Jr. -- started at McDonald's earning minimum wage. Worked his way to CEO. He said it himself:

"Minimum wage jobs should be entry level for low skill to become a CEO in 35 years with proper training."

Entry level. First rung. Not a destination. Remove that rung and you have not helped anyone climb -- you have just ensured they cannot start.

And the union racket nobody names

Want to know why unions push for minimum wage increases in states where they already have strong membership? Two reasons. First: many union contracts are **indexed to the minimum wage**, so every time the floor goes up, their negotiated wages go up automatically with zero additional bargaining. Second: they are trying to convince non-union service workers that the union is responsible for the raise, hoping to convert them into dues-paying members. As one analyst put it: **"It is hypocritical as hell. Everybody knows it."**

The worker thinks they won. The union collected dues. The employer cut hours. The worker takes home less. Perfect system.

PART THREE: DOES IT ACTUALLY FIGHT POVERTY?

(Even some economists on the left admit: not really.)

Here is where things get genuinely inconvenient for the minimum wage crowd.

Minimum wage increases often benefit people who are **not actually poor**.

Think about who earns minimum wage: frequently a teenager in a household with working parents picking up a summer job. That family does not need the raise.

Meanwhile, many people at the very bottom of the income distribution are either not working at all -- so a higher minimum wage does nothing for them -- or they are in households where the individual wage does not map cleanly to household poverty. The academic conclusion? If reducing poverty is the actual goal, a **direct payment to poor households** is measurably more effective than a wage mandate.

The left chose the policy that sounds better in a campaign speech over the one that works in the real world.

Imagine my shock.

PART FOUR: THE DEPENDENCY MACHINE

In 1965, around **80 to 85 percent of Black children were raised in two-parent households**. That community -- which had survived slavery, the Black Codes, Jim Crow, and systematic economic exclusion -- maintained stronger family cohesion than most of the country. That is a documented historical fact.

Then the Great Society arrived.

Marriage penalties were built into the welfare architecture. Married? Lose benefits. Single mother? Keep them. The program structurally punished family formation and rewarded single parenthood. Today, **fewer than 30% of Black children live in two-parent households**. Out-of-wedlock births went from 21% in 1965 to over 77% today. The people loudest about systemic racism built the system that produced these outcomes. Then they blame the outcomes on racism.

The mechanics of the trap are not complicated. Minimum wage mandates price low-skill workers out of entry-level jobs. Those workers qualify for welfare. Welfare benefits shrink as earned income rises -- in many cases the effective marginal tax rate on a welfare recipient makes accepting a low-wage job a **net financial loss**. So rational people choose welfare over work. Not because they are lazy. Because the math tells them to.

Those individuals, now dependent on government programs, vote reliably for the party that promises to protect those programs. That party delivers. The dependency grows. The votes are locked in.

The antebellum South needed a captive labor force. The Democratic Party of 2025 needs a **dependent population** -- poorly educated, priced out of entry-level work, reliant on government checks -- to hold its coalition together. The mechanism is different. The goal is identical.

PART FIVE: THE PARTY SWITCH THAT DID NOT HAPPEN

"But the parties switched!" Right. I have heard it. Usually from someone whose primary source is social media.

Senator Robert Byrd -- former KKK recruiter -- filibustered the Civil Rights Act of 1964 for fourteen hours. He remained a United States Senator, celebrated by his party, until his death in 2010. Died a Democrat. Eulogized by a Democratic president. He did not switch. His party did not transform.

What switched was the **method of control**. Chains became welfare checks. Overseers became social workers. Plantations became housing projects. The zip codes changed. The dependency model did not.

On January 10, 1963, Congressman Albert Herlong read 45 Communist Goals for America into the Congressional Record. Whether anyone consciously followed this list is not the argument. The argument is whether the outcomes materialized:

Goal 17: Control schools, use them as transmission belts for socialism. Assess your local curriculum and decide.

Goal 28: Eliminate prayer in schools. **Achieved 1962** -- literally the year before this was read into the record.

Goal 40: Discredit the family as an institution. The family structure data above is your answer.

CONCLUSION

I teach science. I have done this for over sixteen years in a district where the establishment gave up on my students before I ever met them. I spent 23 years as a combat medic -- including Iraq, where I helped build a school, a fire station, and a hospital, and personally escorted girls to class so they would not be killed for wanting an education. Before that I worked overnight paramedic shifts in Cleveland, drove to morning college classes, and drove back to do it again. I raised four kids on a teacher's salary without going into debt.

I am not writing this from a think tank. I am writing it from a classroom in a community that has been on the receiving end of these policies for decades.

The minimum wage does not help my students find their first job. It makes them unemployable. Welfare does not lift families in my neighborhood. It restructures their financial incentives so that marrying, stabilizing, and building is the economically irrational choice. And the party that has run the school boards, city councils, and state legislatures in the highest-poverty American cities for decades keeps producing the same results and demanding more of the same policy.

Quinn's First Law of Liberalism: liberalism always generates the exact opposite of its stated intent. Every time.

The antebellum South needed slaves. The modern Democratic Party needs dependents. The packaging evolved. The model did not. And the people paying for it are, now as then, disproportionately Black and Brown Americans told that anyone trying to free them from this arrangement is their enemy.

That is not an accident. That is a feature.

But what do I know -- I am only a science teacher who reads the peer-reviewed economic literature, the primary historical record, and the Congressional Record instead of taking policy cues from a politician who calls for \$15 minimum wages while paying his own staff as independent contractors to avoid the cost.

SOURCES (I know people will ask, so this will save me time)

Thomas Leonard | Illiberal Reformers (Princeton Univ. Press, 2016)

Ira Katznelson | Fear Itself (Liveright, 2013)

Neumark & Wascher | Minimum Wages (MIT Press, 2008)

University of Washington -- Seattle minimum wage study (9% hour cuts; \$125/mo loss)

CBO -- \$17 minimum wage projection: 350,000 exit labor force

South Carolina study -- 15.5% employment drop, non-diploma workers

Milton Friedman -- Newsweek, Sept. 26, 1966

Congressional Record -- Rep. Albert Herlong, January 10, 1963

FLSA floor debates -- Rep. Martin Dies, 1938

Jim Quinn | Laws of Liberalism