

## Efforts to Improve the Minimum Wage Blocked

Earlier this week, the U.S. Senate blocked the “Minimum Wage Fairness Act” (S. 2223), a bill that would raise the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$10.10 by 2016 and has bipartisan support among the majority of Americans. It would have also substantially increased the minimum wage for tipped workers, who make only \$2.13 per hour. The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) issued a [statement](#) expressing disappointment in the Senate’s missed opportunity to help lift approximately 28 million workers out of poverty and improve their standard of living. [Tell us](#) what you think.

As the fastest-growing segment of the American workforce, Latinos understand the value of hard work. Unfortunately, far [too many hardworking individuals](#) in this country struggle to provide necessities for their families because they aren’t paid decent, livable wages. Nearly one-quarter of workers who would be directly affected by the minimum wage increase are Latino. Raising the minimum wage would ensure that more people who work in low-wage jobs can afford the basics and help the economy grow.

Looking ahead, NCLR will continue highlighting [stories](#) of workers in our communities as well as advocating for federal and state policies that create [living wage jobs](#) for all working families.

### Latino Employment Statistics for April 2014

The [latest report](#) from the U.S. Department of Labor shows that U.S. employment increased by 288,000 workers in April 2014, a greater-than-average increase. Employment rose due in part to gains in professional and business services (+75,000 employed), retail trade (+35,000), food services and restaurants (+33,000), construction (+32,000), and temporary help services (+24,000).

The national unemployment rate declined to a 5.5-year low of 6.3%, down from 6.7% last month. Similarly, the Latino unemployment rate declined 0.6 points, from 7.9% to 7.3%. Yet both the Latino labor force participation rate and the employment-to-population ratio declined as well. The departure of approximately 289,000 Latinos from the labor force likely explains the decline in unemployment. Workers could decide to exit the labor force because they have been unsuccessful in their job search or for other reasons, such as deciding to attend school or care for dependents full time.

Table 1. The Employment Situation for Latino Workers in April 2014

Indicators	Latinos, April 2014
<b>Employed</b> — <i>Working people over the age of 16, including those temporarily absent from their jobs</i>	<b>23.2 million</b>
<b>Unemployed</b> — <i>Those who are available to work, make an effort to find a job, or expect to be called back from a layoff but are not working</i>	<b>1.8 million</b>
<b>Civilian Labor Force</b> — <i>The sum of employed and unemployed people</i>	<b>25.3 million</b>
<b>Not in the Labor Force</b> — <i>People over the age of 16 classified as neither employed nor unemployed</i>	<b>13.1 million</b>
<b>Unemployment Rate</b> — <i>Share of the labor force that is unemployed</i>	<b>7.3%</b>
<b>Labor Force Participation Rate</b> — <i>Share of the population over the age of 16 that is in the labor force</i>	<b>65.6%</b>
<b>Employment-Population Ratio</b> — <i>Share of the population over the age of 16 that is working</i>	<b>60.8%</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment Status of the Hispanic or Latino Population by Sex and Age," *Current Population Survey*, <http://www.bls.gov/webapps/legacy/cpsatab3.htm> (accessed May 2, 2014), Table A-3.

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