

# MINIMUM WAGE AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION

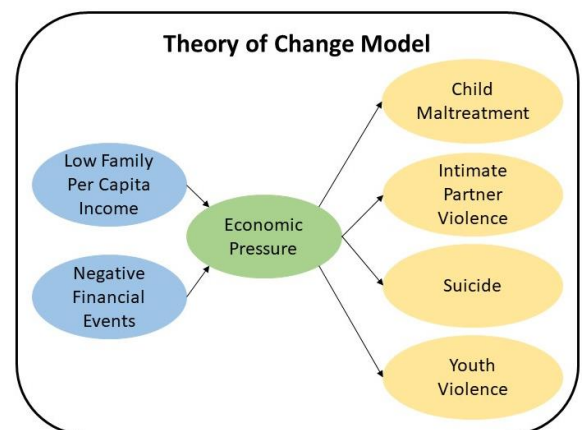
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## MINIMUM WAGE AND VIOLENCE OUTCOMES

Minimum wage is defined as "the minimum amount of remuneration that an employer is required to pay wage earners for the work performed during a given period."<sup>1</sup> In Georgia, the state minimum wage is \$5.15/hour, unless the employee is covered under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), in which case the federal minimum wage of \$7.25/hour applies.<sup>2</sup> In February 2023, state representatives filed HB 241, a bill that advocates for raising the minimum wage in Georgia to \$15/hour.<sup>3</sup>

Minimum wage has important implications for health. The Family Stress Model (FSM) posits that economic hardships lead to increased parental stress, which is associated with disrupted parenting and ultimately negative development outcomes for children.<sup>4,5</sup> These outcomes could include violence outcomes.<sup>6</sup> The CDC recommends strengthening family financial security via policy as a strategy to prevent violence, such as adverse childhood experiences and child abuse and neglect.<sup>7,8</sup>

Research in this area is limited. This policy brief summarizes existing research examining the impact of changes in minimum wage on a variety of violence outcomes.



*Our model is based on the Family Stress Model (FSM) and adopted for violence<sup>14</sup>*

## CHILD MALTREATMENT

**There is consistent evidence that increased minimum wage helps prevent child maltreatment during the early years,** though evidence supporting the relationship between minimum wage and child maltreatment outcomes across ages is more mixed.

- One study examining minimum wage and child protective services reports of maltreatment found increasing minimum wage leads to fewer child maltreatment reports, particularly for neglect.<sup>9</sup> Further, evidence supports minimum wage as having a protective effect against neglect among younger children (most salient between 0-3 years).<sup>10</sup> Another study found increased minimum wage reduced mothers' reports of physical and psychological aggression towards their children, as well as self-reported spanking behaviors by mothers and fathers.<sup>11</sup>
- Conversely, a separate study examining the relationship between minimum wage and self-reported parental maltreatment found no effect.<sup>12</sup> Further, increased minimum wage was not observed to have a protective effect against parental neglect among older children, nor affect other forms of child maltreatment, including physical assault and psychological aggression.<sup>10</sup>

## YOUTH VIOLENCE

Evidence indicates increases in minimum wage can help decrease youth violence.

- Increases in minimum wage have been associated with decreases in violence behaviors - such as fighting, physical destruction, and making threats - among youth,<sup>6</sup> as well as a reduction in homicides among White youth.<sup>13</sup>
- One study found Black youth experience smaller protective effects of improved family economic indicators on homicide, potentially as a result of societal barriers that limit their opportunity to experience the same health and social benefits from current economic policies compared to White families.<sup>13</sup>
- No relationship was observed between changes in minimum wage and less extreme externalizing behaviors, such as rule breaking and attention problems.<sup>6</sup>

## INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Evidence on this outcome is particularly limited. One study found no relationship between state minimum wage policy and women's IPV experiences.<sup>14</sup>

## SUICIDE

Evidence indicates increases in minimum wage have been associated with decreased suicide rates,<sup>15,16</sup> and slower growth of suicide rates.<sup>17</sup>

**A \$1 increase in minimum wage was associated with...**



reduction in youth violence behaviors<sup>6</sup>



reduction in White youth homicides<sup>13\*</sup>



reduction in adult suicides<sup>15</sup>

*\*significant reduction not observed among Black youth*

## Addressing root causes of violence can have a cascading impact across multiple violence outcomes. These findings support action at multiple levels:

- Increasing federal and/or state minimum wage, in tandem with additional family economic support policies
- Increase funding of violence prevention research (currently <1% of NIH federal budget)
- Increase research on minimum wage and violence outcomes, particularly racial disparities

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