A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT INCREASING THE STATE'S MINIMUM WAGE IN PHASES UNTIL 2022 WHEN THE WAGE SHALL BE ADJUSTED AUTOMATICALLY EACH YEAR BY INCREASES IN THE COST OF LIVING.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 95-25.3 reads as rewritten:

"§ 95-25.3. Minimum wage.

(a) Every employer shall pay to each employee who in any workweek performs any work, wages of at least six dollars and fifteen cents ($6.15) per hour or the minimum wage set forth in paragraph 1 of section 6(a) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 U.S.C. 206(a)(1), as that wage may change from time to time, whichever is higher, except as otherwise provided in this section.

(1) Effective January 1, 2018, eight dollars and eighty cents ($8.80) per hour or the minimum wage set forth in paragraph 1 of section 6(a) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 U.S.C. 206(a)(1), as that wage may change from time to time, whichever is higher, except as otherwise provided in this section.

(2) Effective January 1, 2019, ten dollars and thirty five cents ($10.35) per hour or the minimum wage set forth in paragraph 1 of section 6(a) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 U.S.C. § 206(a)(1), as that wage may change from time to time, whichever is higher, except as otherwise provided in this section.

(3) Effective January 1, 2020, twelve dollars ($12.00) per hour or the minimum wage set forth in paragraph 1 of section 6(a) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 U.S.C. § 206(a)(1), as that wage may change from time to time, whichever is higher, except as otherwise provided in this section.

(4) Effective January 1, 2021, thirteen dollars and fifty cents ($13.50) per hour or the minimum wage set forth in paragraph 1 of section 6(a) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 U.S.C. § 206(a)(1), as that wage may change from time to time, whichever is higher, except as otherwise provided in this section.

(5) Effective January 1, 2022, fifteen dollars ($15.00) per hour or the minimum wage set forth in paragraph 1 of section 6(a) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 U.S.C. § 206(a)(1), as that wage may change from time to time, whichever is higher, except as otherwise provided in this section. Beginning September 30, 2022, and on each September 30 thereafter, the Commissioner of Labor shall calculate an adjusted minimum wage rate using the Consumer Price Index (All Urban Consumers, U.S. City Average for All Items), CPI-U, or its successor index, as calculated by the U.S. Department of Labor for the 12-month period..."
preceding the previous September 1. Each adjusted minimum wage rate calculated shall be published on September 30 and take effect on the following January 1.

(b) In order to prevent curtailment of opportunities for employment, the wage rate for full-time students, learners, apprentices, and messengers, as defined under the Fair Labor Standards Act, shall be ninety percent (90%) of the rate in effect under subsection (a) above, rounded to the lowest nickel.

(c) The Commissioner, in order to prevent curtailment of opportunities for employment, may, by regulation, establish a wage rate less than the wage rate in effect under section (a) which may apply to persons whose earning or productive capacity is impaired by age or physical or mental deficiency or injury, as such persons are defined under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

(d) The Commissioner, in order to prevent curtailment of opportunities for employment of the economically disadvantaged and the unemployed, may, by regulation, establish a wage rate not less than eighty-five percent (85%) of the otherwise applicable wage rate in effect under subsection (a) which shall apply to all persons (i) who have been unemployed for at least 15 weeks and who are economically disadvantaged, or (ii) who are, or whose families are, receiving Work First Family Assistance or who are receiving supplemental security benefits under Title XVI of the Social Security Act.

Pursuant to regulations issued by the Commissioner, certificates establishing eligibility for such subminimum wage shall be issued by the Division of Employment Security.

The regulation issued by the Commissioner shall not permit employment at the subminimum rate for a period in excess of 52 weeks.

(e) The Commissioner, in order to prevent curtailment of opportunities for employment, and to not adversely affect the viability of seasonal establishments, may, by regulation, establish a wage rate not less than eighty-five percent (85%) of the otherwise applicable wage rate in effect under subsection (a) which shall apply to any employee employed by an establishment which is a seasonal amusement or recreational establishment, or a seasonal food service establishment.

(f) Tips earned by a tipped employee may be counted as wages only up to the amount permitted in section 3(m) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 U.S.C. 203(m), if the tipped employee is notified in advance, is permitted to retain all tips and the employer maintains accurate and complete records of tips received by each employee as such tips are certified by the employee monthly or for each pay period. Even if the employee refuses to certify tips accurately, tips may still be counted as wages when the employer complies with the other requirements of this section and can demonstrate by monitoring tips that the employee regularly receives tips in the amount for which the credit is taken. Tip pooling shall also be permissible among employees who customarily and regularly receive tips; however, no employee's tips may be reduced by more than fifteen percent (15%) under a tip pooling arrangement.

(g) Repealed by Session Laws 2006-259, s. 18, effective August 23, 2006."

SECTION 2. This act is effective when it becomes law.