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# Taxpayers To Shoulder Cost Of Minimum Wage Hike

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It's supposed to create a living wage for low-wage workers.

Now it turns out that \$9 an hour minimum wage by 2016 is mostly at taxpayer expense.

Even left-leaning fiscal experts are saying it could backfire.

"It has these perverse employment incentives," said James Parrott, deputy director of the Fiscal Policy Institute.

Buried in the state budget is reimbursement from the state for businesses.

It covers most of the wage increase if the worker is a teenager and a student.

So if you're an employer, older workers, comparatively, just got more expensive.

"So it could lead to reduced employment of low-wage working adults trying to support families," said Parrott.

Employers will now have a new incentive to keep low wages low so they qualify for reimbursement.

"So it's a maximum minimum wage, since you only get the credit as long as you keep wages low, rather than reward effective employees," said Parrott.

So what do taxpayers think about picking up the tab?

You might be surprised.

"These poor guys on minimum wage, it's rough, it's rough. They take it out of my pocket, they take it out," said Jim Shorman of Watertown.

"I don't mind it. I wouldn't mind if the taxpayer pays a little bit for the kids," said Joanne Benware of Evans Mills.

how much will it cost?

**That's not being made public until after the state budget is final.**