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Subject: Minimum Wage Could be Decisive Issue in Key 2014 Election Battlegrounds

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New Public Policy Polling surveys in 6 states with highly competitive races either for the Senate or Governor this fall- Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina, and Wisconsin- find strong support for increasing the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour, and that Republican candidates could face backlash for their opposition to the raise.

Key findings from the surveys include:

-A majority of voters in every state supports increasing the minimum wage to \$10.10, by margins ranging from 14 to 28 points. On average more than 80% of Democrats support the increase, as do at least a plurality of independents and an average of about 30% of Republicans in each state:

| State | Support for Increasing the Minimum Wage |
|----------------|---|
| Illinois | 61/33 (+28) |
| North Carolina | 58/36 (+22) |
| Kentucky | 56/35 (+21) |
| Louisiana | 55/38 (+17) |
| Iowa | 53/38 (+15) |
| Wisconsin | 53/39 (+14) |

-The opposition of Republican candidates to increasing the minimum wage makes voters less likely to support them- and that could make the difference in what are shaping up to be very tight races. Voters in these six states say they're less likely to vote for the Republican candidate based on their stance on the minimum wage by anywhere from 6 all the way up to 30 points. These contests are all within 5 points right now in the HuffPo Pollster average of polls, indicating that having a position so unpopular with voters could really hurt the GOP candidates in these races:

| State | % More/Less Likely to Support Republican Candidate for Opposing Minimum Wage Increase |
|----------------|---|
| Illinois | 17/47 (-30) |
| Iowa | 24/47 (-23) |
| Wisconsin | 25/44 (-19) |
| Kentucky | 31/39 (-8) |
| Louisiana | 29/37 (-8) |
| North Carolina | 32/38 (-6) |



-One reason voters are so supportive of increasing the minimum wage is that few voters in these states believe they could live on the current wage. Only 14-18% of voters in these six states think they could support their families on the minimum wage, to 70-74% who don't think they would be able to. Voters across party lines agree that the minimum wage would not be enough for them to support their families- on average 83% of Democrats, 73% of independents, and 63% of Republicans share that sentiment:

| State | % Who Think They Could/Could Not Support Family on Minimum Wage |
|----------------|---|
| Wisconsin | 14/74 |
| Illinois | 15/74 |
| Kentucky | 15/74 |
| North Carolina | 16/73 |
| Louisiana | 18/71 |
| Iowa | 18/70 |

-Opposing an increase in the minimum wage has the potential to keep on hurting Republicans beyond this year's election. In the 4 states with key Senate races this year, voters say by an average 26 point margin that they will blame the Republicans over the Democrats if no minimum wage legislation is passed this year. That could significantly hurt their efforts to try to take back the White House in 2016:

| State | % Who Would Blame Republicans/Democrats For Failing to Increase Minimum Wage |
|----------------|--|
| Iowa | 53/22 (+31) |
| North Carolina | 53/24 (+29) |
| Kentucky | 51/26 (+25) |
| Louisiana | 48/28 (+20) |

The minimum wage is a potent issue in all of these states, and continued failure to address it may haunt Republicans both this fall and in the years to come.

Public Policy Polling interviewed 767 likely voters in Louisiana, 974 likely voters in North Carolina, 812 likely voters in Illinois, 659 likely voters in Iowa, 1,175 likely voters in Kentucky, and 841 likely voters in Wisconsin between October 10th and 12th. The margins of error for the surveys are +/-3.5% in Louisiana, +/-3.1% in North Carolina, +/-3.4% in Illinois, +/-3.8% in Iowa, +/-2.9% in Kentucky, and +/-3.4% in Wisconsin.