

Legislature Approves \$35K Minimum Salary for Government Workers, Effective 2025, Up From Original \$32K Proposal

The Legislature passed Bill 36-0053 with amendments raising the minimum salary for gov't employees to \$35,000 beginning in 2025, adding fiscal safeguards and cost-of-living reviews, and signaling readiness to override a potential veto from the governor.

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The bill seeking to increase minimum wage for government employees was passed by the 36th Legislature on Wednesday, but not before lawmakers approved an amendment that would raise the salary floor even higher than [its sponsor originally intended](#).

When it was first introduced in the 34th Legislature by Senator Kurt Vialet, the draft legislation sought to bump workers who earn \$27,040 annually up to \$32,000 in wages. Though it was largely supported then, the measure was vetoed by Governor Albert Bryan Jr. The proposal returned to the legislative floor on Monday as Bill 36-0053, with lawmakers pledging to push it through once more. During that Committee of the Whole meeting, Senator Dwayne DeGraff urged his colleagues to consider a \$35,000 minimum instead.

On Wednesday, Senator Novelle Francis took up that suggestion and moved the requisite amendment. Another amendment, this time from Senator Kurt Vialet, moved the date of implementation forward from 2026 to Oct. 1, 2025.

A third amendment, also promised by Senator Angel Bolques two days prior, was brought forward. It requires the Office of Management and Budget to submit a report to the Legislature “detailing the projected fiscal impact of this Act, including anticipated changes to personnel expenditures and agency operating budgets resulting from the increase in minimum salary.” This report will be due by March 31, 2026. An analysis of cost of living trends by the Department of Finance will also be required every two years, beginning in 2028. This analysis will evaluate whether future increases are “warranted based on inflation, inflationary data, and economic indicators.”

According to Bolques, the amendment reflects a “data driven safeguard.” “If we're really serious about good governance, then this amendment isn't optional. It's essential,” he said. His colleagues agreed.

“Everything else have been raising under the sun, and it must come time that we give the people their due share,” noted Senator Franklin Johnson. Senator Alma Francis Heyliger, too, congratulated her colleagues for recognizing the “importance of giving people a helping hand, trying to move them upwards when it comes to finances and really assisting them where it's necessary.”

“It's necessary because of the cost of living,” agreed Senator Hubert Frederick, aware that the Legislature would have to “dig deep to make sure we could fund it and deal with the associated problems that will come with it.” Increasing the minimum salary would grant the “hardest working people at least a fighting chance to stay ahead of these very expensive, lovely islands,” he argued.

Senator Francis, meanwhile, urged business owners not to act in a retaliatory manner. “Every time we move these salaries, we have a tendency of small businesses again to increase their prices as well, which we see a net zero result.” He pleaded with the community to be “mindful.”

The measure now moves to Governor Albert Byran Jr. for his approval or rejection. Senators are expected to override the governor's veto if necessary.