

California's \$20 Fast Food Wage Law Is Hurting the Workers and Families It Was Meant to Help



Fast food jobs are SHRINKING in California—while neighboring states hold steady.

- Seasonally-adjusted data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and [Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis](#) show that **California's quick-service restaurants have LOST 33,963 jobs** since September 2023 when AB 1228 was signed into law.
- Meanwhile, fast food jobs in **Oregon and Nevada have grown** during the same period.

DATE	Total Fast Food Jobs CALIFORNIA	Total Fast Food Jobs Nevada	Total Fast Food Jobs Oregon
Sept 2023	740,110	63,495	74,260
Oct 2023	736,187	63,469	73,523
Nov 2023	735,320	64,035	73,710
Dec 2023	735,472	64,269	74,006
Jan 2024	739,832	64,140	72,855
Feb 2024	731,695	64,166	72,911
Mar 2024	729,597	64,173	73,409
Apr 2024	730,906	64,346	73,397
May 2024	726,788	64,397	73,717
Jun 2024	719,567	64,057	73,740
Jul 2024	721,641	64,280	73,328
Aug 2024	718,390	64,217	73,392
Sep 2024	716,065	64,241	73,888
Oct 2024	717,922	64,602	75,160
Nov 2024	717,102	64,354	74,731
Dec 2024	716,507	64,354	74,923
Jan 2025	716,872	64,443	75,611
Feb 2025	711,806	64,086	75,765
Mar 2025	707,240	64,087	75,441
Apr 2025	703,364	65,288	75,601
May 2025	707,628	64,839	77,913
June 2025	706,147	64,381	77,807
Sept 2023 – June 2025	-33,963	+886	+3,547

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, All Employees: Leisure and Hospitality: Limited-Service Restaurants and Other Eating Places in [California](#), [Nevada](#) and [Oregon](#); retrieved July 21, 2025. NOTE: This data is not collected for Arizona.

- California's [fast food employment](#) is **now at its lowest sustained growth rate** since the Great Recession, barring the COVID-19 pandemic.



Fast food workers are losing hours—and paychecks.

- A [recent analysis](#) shows that California's non-tipped restaurant workers—many in fast food—have **lost up to five hours of work per week** since the \$20 wage took effect in April 2024.
- That's a **loss of up to 250 hours per worker per year—or seven weeks of work**—and thousands of dollars in lost wages.



Food prices are climbing.

- A [report](#) by the Berkeley Research Group found that food prices at California's fast food restaurants have surged **by 14.5% since September 2023**—nearly double the national average of 8.2%.