

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 32,525 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	740,011	63,549	74,327
Oct 2023	736,111	63,480	73,545
Nov 2023	735,242	64,061	73,763
Dec 2023	735,403	64,302	74,040
Jan 2024	739,696	64,176	72,880
Feb 2024	731,699	64,168	72,896
Mar 2024	729,637	64,173	73,362
Apr 2024	730,863	64,326	73,321
May 2024	726,933	64,354	73,635
June 2024	719,773	64,023	73,626
July 2024	721,778	64,175	73,279
Aug 2024	718,394	64,228	73,570
Sep 2024	715,923	64,314	73,979
Oct 2024	717,812	64,621	75,191
Nov 2024	716,990	64,388	74,795
Dec 2024	716,410	64,577	74,961
Jan 2025	716,783	64,488	75,627
Feb 2025	711,802	64,088	75,736
Mar 2025	707,275	64,083	75,373
Apr 2025	703,309	65,260	75,497
May 2025	707,794	64,794	77,803
June 2025	706,602	64,634	77,584
July 2025	707,193	64,845	77,608
Aug 2025	707,486	65,954	77,090
Sept 2023 – Aug 2025	-32,525	+2,405	+2,736

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 September 22, 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%.