

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION  
Washington

PUERTO RICAN COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS MINIMUM WAGE RATES  
FOR 12 ISLAND INDUSTRIES

A schedule of minimum wage rates for Puerto Rican industries was recommended today (Friday) in a report to General Philip B. Fleming, Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, United States Department of Labor, signed by Msgr. Francis J. Haas, Chairman of the Industry Committee for Puerto Rico.

Under a recent congressional amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act (Federal Wage and Hour Law), the committee was empowered to recommend a minimum wage below the present statutory wage of 30 cents an hour, providing such wage rate will not give "any industry in Puerto Rico or in the Virgin Islands a competitive advantage over any industry in the United States."

The Committee studied economic and competitive conditions in twelve Insular industries, and by a majority vote in each case, recommended these minimum rates:

A minimum of 16 cents an hour for the "vegetable, fruit and fruit juice canning industry."

A minimum of 15 cents an hour for the "vegetable packing industry."

A minimum rate of 25 cents an hour for the "manufactured cocoanut industry" which is the manufacture of dessicated and prepared cocoanut."

A minimum of 27-1/2 cents an hour for the "ocean pearl button industry," defined as the manufacture of buttons from mother-of-pearl, ocean-pearl, or sea-pearl.

The Committee recommended two minimums for the "raffia handbag industry," a new industry on the island -- 12-1/2 cents an hour for hand-sewing operations, and 20 cents an hour for other operations including, but not by way of limitation,

cutting, machine operating, stamping, sorting, pinning, washing, finishing, pressing, examining, and packing. The "raffia handbag industry" is defined as the manufacture of women's handbags, pocketbooks, and purses from straw, embroidered or embellished with raffia.

The Committee recommended that at least 25 cents an hour be paid to all workers employed in the seven remaining industries investigated. They are: hosiery; hair net; cigar; cigarette; mattress, quilt and pillow; bay oil, bay rum and aromatic alcohol; and the straw hat industry, which means the manufacture of hats from straw with the understanding that "straw" is used in the trade sense and not confined to materials made from natural fibers.

The recommendations apply to all occupations in the industries which are necessary to the production of the articles including clerical, maintenance, shipping and selling occupations.

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