

DSGN 352 FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL REVISED

Matt Perry • Nov. 11, 2015 • working draft

Purpose: To see if there are any apparent relationships between a country's minimum wage and job creation. Ideally, the visualization could be built with future expansion in mind and other variables — such as poverty levels, unionization and median family income — could be included to provide a deeper and/or different look into how wages factor into the overall economy.

Question driving creation: A common talking point among Republicans is that increasing the minimum wage in the United States would cause job growth to stagnate, or worse, to reverse itself. The U.S. is currently in its 65th consecutive month of private-sector job growth, but wages have not rebounded since the Great Recession. My theory is that increasing the minimum wage does not inversely lead to job growth stagnation or losses.

Intended learning opportunity: The ideal would be validity, either way. If the trend is seen in other OECD member nations, that would bolster the oft-repeated Republican talking point. If it isn't seen, as I suspect, that would strengthen the argument that increasing the minimum wage to something more comparable to a living wage should be considered as it most likely wouldn't cause the American economy to tank (much like the implementation of the Affordable Care Act didn't cause an economic meltdown).

Source of data: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which tracks data and makes apples-to-apples comparisons possible for 34 countries.

Efforts required to make data usable: The data is in Excel format, already normalized and adjusted for inflation. I'm downloading the information now, and will likely reach out to Hannah and seek her guidance in merging the data into one spreadsheet efficiently.

Scope of functionality/features to implement: I'm currently thinking of a scatterplot or pair of charts to plot minimum wage and job creation/loss by year to compare the U.S. to other OECD member nations. As I ponder my approach this weekend, I'm sure other options may come to mind.

Similarity to existing interactives: I can't think of any currently, but am planning to review this weekend my collection of print, static and interactive graphics I've liked over the years, as well as graphics annuals such as Malofiej and Society for News Design.

Anticipated challenges: Beyond the underlying challenge of getting D3 to work for me, none come to mind.