

MEMO: CA Fast Food Nears 20,000 Lost Jobs Since \$20 Minimum Wage Signed, Newly-Revised Data Shows

Prepared by the Employment Policies Institute
September 2025

New [quarterly employment data](#) released on September 9 show California's fast food industry continued to lose jobs through the first quarter of 2025. Despite Governor Gavin Newsom's recent victory lap claiming the Golden State is "protecting fast food workers," Bureau of Labor Statistics data shows the opposite.

- Since the law was signed in September 2023, BLS quarterly data shows **California's fast food industry lost 19,102 jobs (-3.3% loss)**, including 15,988 fast food jobs lost since the law went into effect in April 2024.
- California's fast food job loss rate (-3.3% of jobs lost) more than **doubled the losses in fast food restaurants nationally** (-1.6% of jobs lost) since September 2023.
- California's fast food restaurants accounted for **a quarter (25.3%) of all fast food industry job losses** in the nation over this period.
- California's fast food industry job loss also outpaced total private industry job losses in the state (-1.3% of jobs lost), and **represents nearly 10% of all statewide job losses just in fast food** over this period.

Number of California Fast Food Jobs

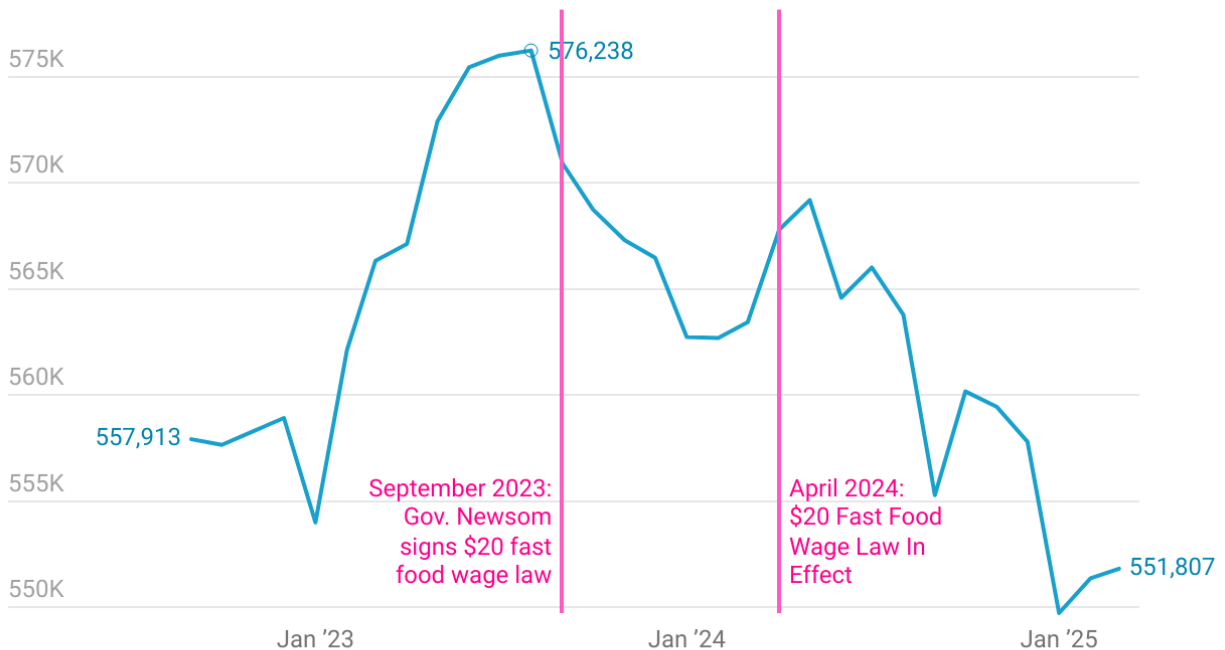


Chart: Employment Policies Institute • Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages • Created with Datawrapper

Comparing Fast Food Employment Growth in California vs. National

September 2023 - March 2025

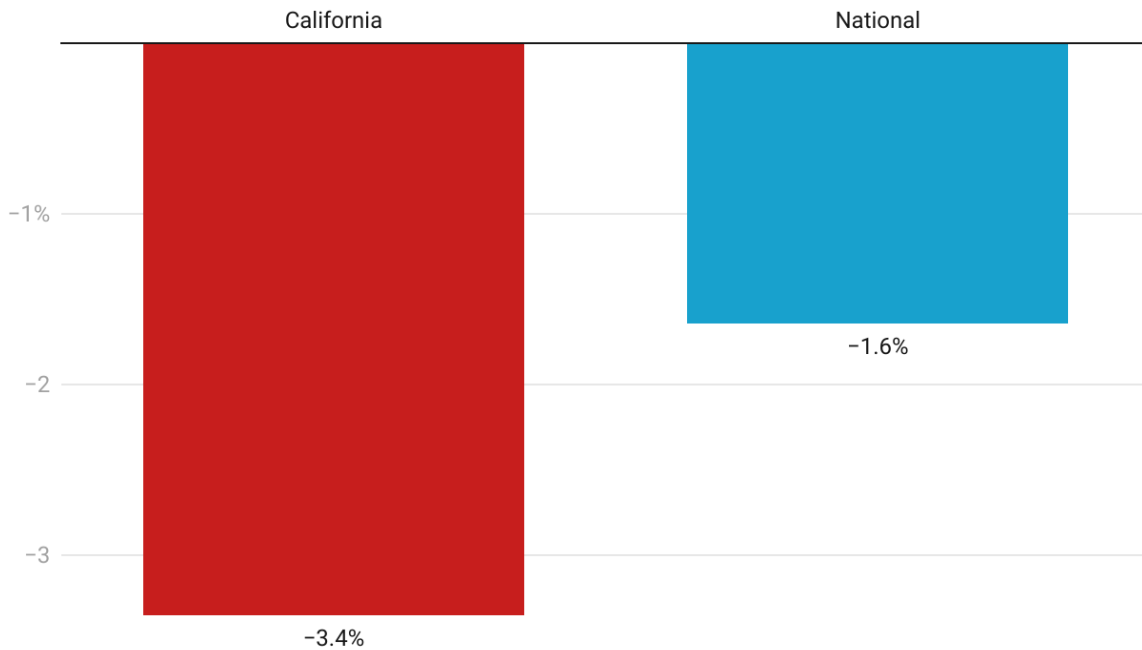


Chart: Employment Policies Institute • Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages • Created with Datawrapper

Comparing Employment Growth in California's Fast Food Industry vs. All Industries

September 2023 - March 2025

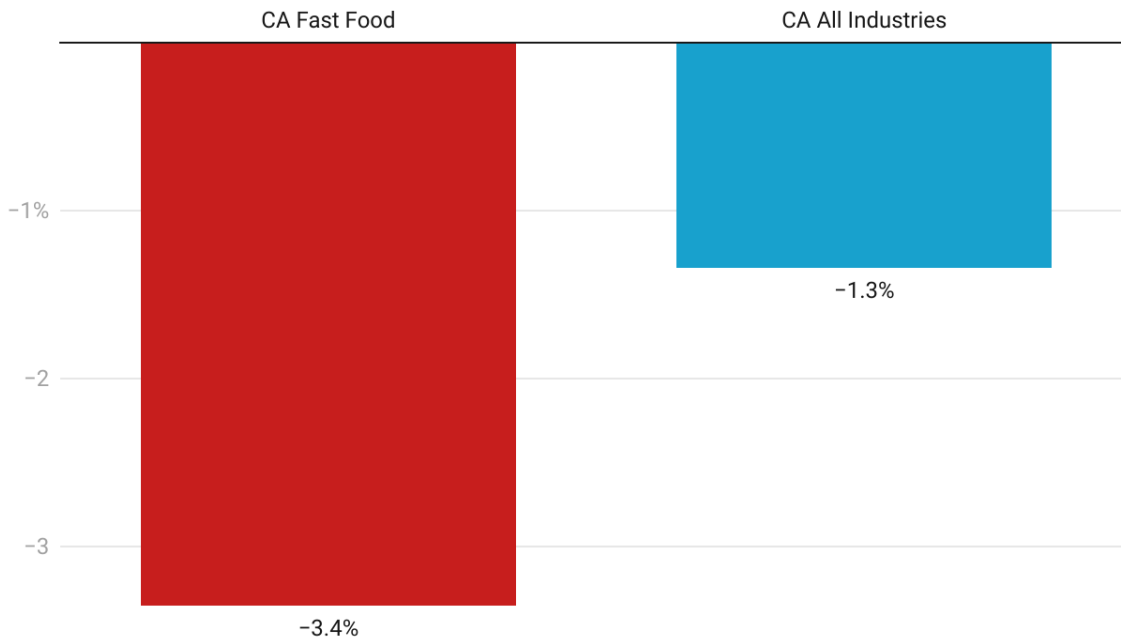


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Month	California Limited-Service Restaurant Jobs
September 2022	557,913
October 2022	557,646
November 2022	558,289
December 2022	558,915
January 2023	553,987
February 2023	562,121
March 2023	566,323
April 2023	567,117
May 2023	572,904
June 2023	575,441
July 2023	575,997
August 2023	576,238
September 2023	570,909
October 2023	568,736
November 2023	567,292
December 2023	566,469
January 2024	562,728
February 2024	562,681
March 2024	563,434
April 2024	567,795
May 2024	569,186
June 2024	564,579
July 2024	566,005
August 2024	563,776
September 2024	555,273
October 2024	560,164
November 2024	559,431
December 2024	557,791
January 2025	549,714
February 2025	551,360
March 2025	551,807