Variable Definitions and Data Sources

for "Powers and Practices in Labor Standards Enforcement"

Overview

This document describes all variables used in the analyses reported in "Powers and Practices in Labor Standards Enforcement," including variable definitions, construction procedures, and data sources. Variables derived from publicly available data sources are cited accordingly. All variable names correspond to those used in the replication Stata files.

Section 1. Outcome Variables

[mwviolstate25]

- **Description:** Minimum wage violation (state minimum wage by month) with $0.25 buffer
- **Type:** Binary
- **Construction:**
  Use EPI's wageotc_noadj variable. Note that for hourly and nonhourly workers, this includes OTC (overtime, tips, and commissions) for all; no imputed, topcoded, or hours vary. For state minimum wage (monthly), use Vaghul and Zipperer data (https://github.com/benzipperer/historicalminwage).
- **Source:**
  EPI CPS-ORG microdata, Vaghul and Zipperer.

Section 2. Key Independent Variables

[powers]

- **Description:**
  Index measuring strength of state laws (minimum wage and wage payment), 2021-2023
- **Construction:**
  See paper text and Appendix A
- **Source:**
  powers.xlsx

[practices]

- **Description:**
  Index measuring state enforcement practices (minimum wage and wage payment)
- **Construction:**
  See paper text; Appendix B; Appendix C
- **Source:**
  practices.xlsx

Section 3. Control Variables

Demographic variables

[year]

- **Description:**
  Year
- **Source:**
  CPS-ORG via EPI

[age_cat]

- **Description:**
  Age category
- **Construction:**
  gen age_cat = .
  replace age_cat = 1 if age < 25
  replace age_cat = 2 if age >= 25 & age < 35
  replace age_cat = 3 if age >= 35 & age < 45
  replace age_cat = 4 if age >= 45 & age < 55
  replace age_cat = 5 if age >= 55 & age < 65
  replace age_cat = 6 if age >= 65
  label define agecatlbl 1 "<25" 2 "25-34" 3 "35-44" 4 "45-54" 5 "55-64" 6 "65+"
  label values age_cat agecatlbl
- **Source:**
  CPS-ORG via EPI

[female]

- **Description:**
  female
- **Source:**
  CPS-ORG via EPI

[wbhaom]

- **Description:**
  Race/ethnicity, including Asian and multiple
- **Source:**
  CPS-ORG via EPI

[citizen]

- **Description:**
  US Citizen
- **Source:**
  CPS-ORG via EPI

[educ]

- **Description:**
  Five-category level of education of the respondent
- **Source:**
  CPS-ORG via EPI

[mind16]

- **Description:**
  16-category recode of the major industry of the job of the respondent
- **Source:**
  CPS-ORG via EPI

[docc03]

- **Description:**
  docc03 is the Census recode of the detailed occupation of the primary job
- **Source:**
  CPS-ORG via EPI

[unmem]

- **Description:**
  unmem indicates whether the respondent is a member of a union
- **Source:**
  CPS-ORG via EPI

[docc03]

- **Description:**
  docc03 is the Census recode of the detailed occupation of the primary job
- **Source:**
  CPS-ORG via EPI

Policy environment variables

[investigatorspercap]

- **Description:**
  Ratio of reported number of budgeted investigators to civilian labor force
- **Source:**
  investigators.xlsx

[kaitz_c]

- **Description:**
  Ratio of the statutory minimum wage to the median hourly wage. Constructed as state minimum wage divided by median hourly wage. Mean-centered for regression analysis.
- **Source:**
  CPS-ORG via EPI

[fiftyten]

- **Description:**
  Ratio of median wage to tenth percentile measures the degree of compression at the lower end of the wage distribution.
- **Source:**
  CPS-ORG via EPI

Macroeconomic variables

[uemonth]

- **Description:**
  State unemployment by month
- **Source:**
  Bureau of Labor Statistics. States and selected areas: Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population, not seasonally adjusted
  (https://www.bls.gov/web/laus.supp.toc.htm)

[housingpriceindex]

- **Description:**
  Median house price index (quarterly)
- **Source:**
  Federal Housing Finance Agency (https://www.fhfa.gov/data/hpi/datasets?tab=quarterly-data)

Political variables

[political_index]

- **Description:**
  Equal weight given to Caughey and Warshaw's (2018) measure of mass economic liberalism (2018) and to governor's partisanship.
- **Sources:**
  Caughey, Devin and Warshaw, Christopher. "Dynamic Democracy", University of Chicago Press, 2022.
- National Governor's Association, 2021-2023 (https://www.nga.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2023-Governors-Roster.pdf)

[privsector]

- **Description:**
  Private sector union density (proxy for business strength)
- **Source:**
  Hirsch BT, Macpherson DA, Even WE (2025) *Union Membership, Coverage, and Earnings from the CPS*. https://unionstats.com

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Section 4. Exemptions

[exemptions2018]

- **Description:**
  Rough approximation of state/federal minimum wage exemptions as of 2018.
- **Construction:**
  Good faith effort to match statutory exemptions (in FLSA, state laws) to variables in CPS-ORG via EPI microdata.
- **Source:**
  Author-constructed using VitalLaw state minimum wage law summaries.
- **Do file:**
  exemptions2018.do

Section 5. Weights and Survey Design Variables

[orgwgt12]

- **Description:**
  Earnings weight.
- **Use in Analysis:**
  gen orgwgt12=orgwgt/12
- **Source:**
  CPS-ORG via EPI.

[svyset]

- **Description:**
  Declare survey design for dataset. Use orgwgt divided by 12 months as earnings weight. Use region as strata to most closely approximate CPS sample design. Use state as PSU to cluster standard errors at state level.
- **Use in Analysis:**
  svyset statefip [pw=orgwgt12], strat(region) vce(linearized) singleunit(centered)
- **Source:**
  CPS-ORG via EPI.

Notes

- Variable names match those used in the replication Stata do-files.
- All publicly available data sources are cited in the article and referenced here for completeness.
- This document is intended to facilitate replication and transparency, not to substitute for the methodological discussion in the published article.