

For Immediate Release: April 28, 2022
Media Contact: nelp@berlinrosen.com

Workers, lawmakers, business leaders rally for minimum wage raises in New York

New legislation from Sen. Jessica Ramos, Asm. Latoya Joyner indexes the minimum wage to ensure it won't fall behind again

Two million New Yorkers would get raises averaging \$2K per year after raises are phased in

NYC minimum wage would reach \$20.45 by 2025, with proportional increases in L.I./Westchester and upstate

NEW YORK – Today, a coalition of workers, community groups, labor unions, and business leaders launched a new campaign to increase the minimum wage across New York State and ensure it never falls behind again. The debut of the new coalition, [Raise Up NY](#), follows the introduction of amended legislation from Sen. Jessica Ramos and Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner, chairs of their respective chambers' Labor Committees. If passed, the bill would index annual minimum wage increases to a formula based on rising costs of living and productivity growth. The bill ensures that workers will get much-needed annual raises automatically rather than be at the mercy of political winds and legislative fights every few years.

“Now, more than two years into a pandemic-related economic crisis, rent, inflation, the cost of gas and groceries, and billionaires' wealth have all gone up. The only thing that hasn't kept pace is our wages. Pegging the minimum wage to inflation and productivity will put money back in working people's pockets, in turn making us more resilient to fits and starts in the economy. New Yorkers need a raise, and they need it now,” said **Senate Labor Chair, Jessica Ramos** (D, WF - SD13). “Labor, business leaders, and workers are all standing shoulder to shoulder in support of S3062C/A7503B because they know the fundamental truth behind this bill – we all do better when we all do better.”

“For many New York workers, the minimum wage has been capped at \$15 an hour since the end of 2018 and – as prices have gone up with inflation – the economic squeeze impacting working families has worsened,” said **Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner** (D-Bronx, 77th AD), chair of the Assembly Labor Committee. “As a result, New York's low-income workers have been increasingly trapped in a cycle that pushes them further down the economic ladder and into poverty. New York's low-income workers need and deserve a minimum wage that protects them against the ravages of inflation – it is long overdue.”

In response to low pay, worsening working conditions, and a minimum wage that has stagnated for over three years in New York City, the legislation answers the demands of working New Yorkers who need and deserve better compensation. Eighteen states and the District of Columbia already adjust or “index” their minimum wages each year so that they keep up with the rising cost of living. This time-tested approach ensures that the minimum wage doesn't fall behind each year and provides stability for workers and employers alike.

“When this movement started, a \$15 minimum wage was dismissed as pie in the sky,” said **Rebecca Dixon, Executive Director of the National Employment Law Project**. “But thanks to the tremendous efforts of workers and allies, New York envisioned \$15 an hour as a new starting point for the minimum wage more than a decade ago. Now, with spiraling inflation, \$15 is no longer enough. It’s time for New York to lead the way again and pass this crucial legislation.”

New [polling](#) from Data for Progress shows bipartisan support among New York voters for increasing the minimum wage to keep up with living costs, with 62 percent saying the minimum wage should be at least \$20 to be a living wage. New York voters of all backgrounds say they would be more likely to vote for a political candidate who supports raising the minimum wage.

“As a longtime New York business owner, I strongly support this effort to raise and index New York’s minimum wage so it rewards work and keeps up with the cost of living rather than falling behind,” said **David Bolotsky, founder and CEO of Uncommon Goods** in Brooklyn and member of Business for a Fair Minimum Wage. “This is important for workers and businesses. Raising the minimum wage will boost consumer spending, and indexing it will give businesses more predictable, incremental increases to plan around in future years. By paying wages that our workers can live on, we experience lower turnover and see higher productivity and customer satisfaction, which helps us grow and innovate.”

With inflation triggering rising prices, the predictability of the new law provides a key solution so that workers statewide do not fall as far behind.

“Workers deserve a \$20 minimum wage,” said **32BJ SEIU President Kyle Bragg**. “They are being crushed by inflation and a rising cost of living, but wages are not keeping up. Workers deserve a raise, especially when they are reporting that companies like Chipotle are still failing to comply with city-mandated fair scheduling laws. We’re dealing with a crisis for working people in this city and state. If employers won’t do the right thing, we will take the fight to the legislature to ensure the minimum wage rises with inflation so workers don’t get left behind. Thank you to the sponsors of this legislation who are willing to work with workers as we fight for power and dignity in the workplace.”

“Corporate power and profits are through the roof, and inflation is at its highest in 40 years. It's time for workers' wages to keep up with rising costs,” said **Maritza Silva-Farrell, Executive Director of ALIGN** and a leader of the Raise Up NY coalition. “ALIGN is proud to partner with Senator Ramos and Assemblymember Joyner on this landmark legislation, to keep the minimum wage from falling behind and provide lasting security for New York's workers.”

According to estimates by the Economic Policy Institute, two million workers across the state would receive badly needed raises averaging \$2,000 a year once the raises are phased in. The legislation stands to impact New Yorkers most excluded from economic opportunity and growth in the state, including many left at the poverty level.

“Pay for people like me is not keeping up with rising costs,” said **Chipotle worker Ed Dealecio**. “Chipotle paid its CEO \$17.9 million last year, but makes us fight just to get them to follow our local Fair Workweek law. Jobs at Chipotle are insecure with high turnover, because the conditions and low wages are unbearable for so many of us. But we can turn these into secure jobs with dignity and good wages. This new bill offers a minimum wage that makes sense, a minimum wage that works, one that adjusts when we need it to, not when lawmakers get around to it. This would allow me to budget for food, housing, clothes and more, and not worry if my wage next year will put me that much further behind.”

###

S3062C/A7503B is backed by Raise Up NY, a diverse coalition of workers, labor unions, businesses and policy experts, including SEIU 32BJ, ALIGN-NY, the Strong Economy for All Coalition, Business for a Fair Minimum Wage, Make the Road NY, and the National Employment Law Project.