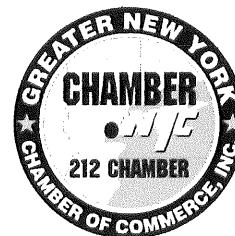


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# Greater New York Chamber of Commerce

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**Testimony on Minimum Wage To the Joint Legislative Public Hearing on 2016-2017 Executive Budget Proposal, Topic "Workforce Development"**

**Chair: Senator Catharine Young**

**February 3, 2016**

As Chairperson of the Greater New York Chamber of Commerce, which provides valuable services to over 30,000 business and civic leaders who represent the backbone of the Greater New York business community, I am pleased to say we wholly support increasing the New York State minimum wage to \$15.

An increased minimum wage is the right move for businesses and workers alike – and we applaud the \$15 proposal to remedy the plight of our State's lowest wage earners. It is unconscionable for New York to have a minimum wage, which, at its current level, leaves millions of New Yorkers in poverty, or at best, struggling just to make ends meet. It is incumbent upon us as business leaders to lift workers over the poverty line.

There is no question that business owners are wary of any additional costs. However, most business owners care for and worry about their employees and note on a daily basis the negative effect of dwindling spending power in the face of rising prices that low-paid hourly workers face. Less spending power means less money for businesses statewide.

As for the argument that a higher minimum wage kills jobs, let's look at the facts. Nearby states like Massachusetts, Vermont and Connecticut haven't lost jobs to New York by having higher minimum wages. Therefore, the claims that an increase to the minimum wage will lead to massive job losses in low-wage sectors of the economy are just not credible.

If we paid a more realistic minimum wage, our business leaders would stay right where they are. Moreover, evidence suggests that higher minimum wages lead to lower turnover rates, meaning workers are more likely to have higher-paying and more stable jobs. This may be because a higher minimum wage reduces the incentive of businesses to operate on a low-wage, high-turnover model.

Furthermore, we concur with The Fiscal Policy Institute that stated that a higher minimum wage will result in more consumer spending, and will actually generate more jobs.

Given the aforementioned, The Greater New York Chamber of Commerce supports raising the minimum wage statewide. Our Chamber has gone on record and stated that the current minimum wage is far too low. The most important benchmarks – purchasing power, wage growth and productivity growth – demonstrate that the current minimum wage of this State is well below what is equitable.

The \$15 minimum wage proposal is a step in the right direction. The proposed minimum wage increases are projected to boost the wages of affected workers and thus the economy will benefit by the increased spending. This is exactly the catalyst that will keep businesses in this great State growing, to reduce inequity, and empower consumers with a larger wallet to spend more money in their community. An increased minimum wage is the right move for businesses and workers alike while preserving the social contract and building a just society.

Respectfully submitted,

**Cynthia D. DiBartolo, Esq.**

Chairperson

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