

## State of New Jersey

## Governor Phil Murphy

# Governor Murphy Signs Landmark Legislation Raising Minimum Wage to \$15 Per Hour

02/4/2019

### *New Law Will Boost Wages for Over One Million New Jersey Workers*

**ELIZABETH** – Governor Phil Murphy today signed legislation that will raise New Jersey's minimum wage to \$15 per hour by 2024. The bill (A-15), sponsored by Senate President Steve Sweeney and Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin, will grow the economy and raise wages for over one million New Jersey workers, giving them a foothold in the middle class.

"For far too long, too many of our fellow New Jerseyans have been struggling to survive on wages that have not kept up with the cost of living," **said Governor Murphy**. "I am incredibly proud to sign legislation that raises the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, ensuring that the most vulnerable among us will have the means to put food on the table, while growing our economy and addressing priorities of the small business community. I thank Senate President Sweeney, Speaker Coughlin, and thousands of advocates and community leaders throughout our state for their unwavering commitment to making this goal a reality."

"In New Jersey there is no way a family can survive on \$8.85 an hour. Fair wages are about paying people enough to afford the rising costs of health care, education and the basic necessities in life," **said Lieutenant Governor Sheila Y. Oliver**, who also serves as Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs. "New Jersey has made a historic decision today that will help raise over a million working families out of poverty while boosting the economy. I proudly stand by Governor Murphy as he signs a \$15 minimum wage into law."

"Our goal of reaching a \$15 minimum wage will now become a reality. A minimum wage should be a living wage," **said Senate President Sweeney**. "This is a progressive plan that will provide greater economic fairness for minimum wage workers, helping to improve their standard of living and their quality of life. We can now achieve greater economic fairness by closing the wealth gap that has separated segments of society."

"I am proud to join Governor Murphy and Senate President Sweeney during this remarkable day to celebrate our minimum wage bill becoming law," **said Speaker Coughlin**. "Too many workers aren't earning enough to make ends meet. But, that all changes today. Today marks a new day for New Jersey residents and future generations, as we gradually raise the minimum wage and help alleviate poverty across our great state."

The current minimum wage in New Jersey is \$8.85 per hour. Under the new law, the base minimum wage for New Jersey workers will increase to \$10 per hour on July 1, 2019. By January 1, 2020, the statewide minimum wage will increase to \$11 per hour, and then will increase by \$1 per hour every January 1st until it reaches \$15 per hour on January 1, 2024.

For seasonal workers and employees at small businesses with five or fewer workers, the base minimum wage will reach \$15 per hour by January 1, 2026. By January 1, 2028, workers in these groups will receive the minimum wage inclusive of inflation adjustments that take place from 2024 to 2028, equalizing the minimum wage with the main cohort of New Jersey workers.

For agricultural workers, the base minimum wage will increase to \$12.50 per hour by January 1, 2024. No later than March 31, 2024, the New Jersey Labor Commissioner and Secretary of Agriculture will jointly decide whether to recommend that the minimum wage for agricultural workers increase to \$15 per hour by January 1, 2027, as specified in the bill. If they cannot come to an agreement, a third member, appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate, will break the tie. If there is a recommendation to disapprove of the scheduled increases or suggest an alternative pathway, the Legislature will have the ability to implement that recommendation by passage of a concurrent resolution.

Elected officials, advocates, and business leaders proclaimed support for New Jersey's new minimum wage law.

"If you work hard and have a full time job, you should be able to afford a roof over your head and food on your table, but sadly, too many across our state and our country can't get by no matter how hard or how long they work," **said Senator Bob Menendez**. "I'd like to applaud Gov. Murphy, Senate President Sweeney and Speaker Coughlin for working together on behalf of the people of New Jersey. When I think of the workers this legislation will benefit, I think of the kind of people I grew up with—men and women who put in long hours in some of the toughest jobs in our society, but still can't seem to get ahead. As Democrats, we will never give up in our fight to create an economy that works for everyone."

"Here in New Jersey, we are setting an example for the rest of the nation by raising the minimum wage and lifting many fellow New Jerseyans out of poverty," **said Senator Cory Booker**, co-sponsor of the federal Raise the Wage Act (S.150). "It is time that we build on New Jersey's successful effort and pass a \$15 minimum wage on the federal level and provide all workers with a living wage."

"No one working full-time in New Jersey should ever have to live in poverty and committing to a \$15 minimum wage is an important step in that direction," **said Rep. Frank Pallone**. "I want to thank Governor Murphy and the legislature for passing a law that will make a real difference in the lives of workers throughout our state. Now, Congress must work to follow Governor Murphy and New Jersey's lead to increase the minimum wage for millions more families throughout our country."

"No one working a full-time job should ever live in poverty. Putting the minimum wage on a path to \$15 will give all New Jerseyans a path to the dignity and security that comes with a living wage," **said Rep. Bill Pascrell**, a cosponsor of H.R. 582, the federal Raise the Wage Act. "I thank Governor Murphy and our state's legislative leaders for their tireless work on this crucial issue. An increased minimum wage will strengthen New Jersey's working class and our state as a whole. Today is a historic day for New Jersey and I will fight to raise the federal minimum wage to bring New Jersey values and policies to the rest of the nation."

"I am incredibly proud that New Jersey is taking action to help over a million workers and boost the state's economy by raising the minimum wage," **said Rep. Donald Norcross**. "Last year, Governor Murphy, Senate President Sweeney and Speaker Coughlin joined me for their first public appearance together calling for \$15 an hour minimum wage. Today, that promise becomes a reality and full-time working New Jerseyans will be lifted out of poverty. I've worked for minimum wage and I spent my career fighting for good pay for workers. I know this is the moral issue of our time. Now, my colleagues in Washington need to wake up, follow my home state's lead and get to work to raise wages."

"In an age of increasing income inequality, it is unconscionable for people to work a full-time job and not have enough income to keep their lights on," **said Rep. Donald M. Payne, Jr.** "At the federal level, I am an original co-sponsor of a bill that would gradually raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. But it's been nearly twelve years since Congress raised the federal minimum wage. I am proud that New Jersey is once again leading the way and not waiting on the federal government. Raising the wage will help New Jersey's working families prosper."

"There can be no understating what this means – a stronger, more vibrant New Jersey for all of its residents," **said Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman**. "Raising the state's minimum wage to \$15 per hour by 2024 won't just help workers, it will lift our entire economy by allowing those individuals to be consumers again. It means workers can afford the goods and services offered by New Jersey businesses. It means more customers at the small businesses on main street. It means more of our communities thrive. The tireless work of the governor and legislature will make New Jersey a model for the nation and the federal government."

"There should be an expectation in this country that anyone who works full time deserves to live above the poverty line," **said Rep. Tom Malinowski**. "I'm proud to represent a state that's leading the way."

"Raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour will dramatically improve the lives of over a million New Jerseyans and their families. It's a bottom-up investment in our economy that will pay dividends for years to come. After years of trickle-down policies that rewarded the wealthy and well-connected at the expense of working families New Jersey is beginning to tackle the income inequality that plagues our state and our nation as a whole. Thank you to Governor Murphy for signing this legislation and all those, including legislative leadership, the workers and advocates who worked tirelessly to ensure this bill made it to the Governor's desk. This is a great day in New Jersey," **said Phyllis Salowe-Kaye, Executive Director, New Jersey Citizen Action**.

"Last fall, we announced a \$15 minimum wage for all hourly employees in the U.S.," **said Brian Huseman, Vice President of Public Policy at Amazon**. "Since then, employees have told us they're having an easier time providing for their families and meeting their financial needs. That's why we called on other companies and policymakers to join us in this endeavor. We applaud Governor Murphy for his efforts to raise wages for New Jersey's entire workforce."

"No family in New Jersey can live on our current minimum wage," **said Giovana Castaneda, Make the Road NJ youth leader.** "Today, New Jersey takes a historic step forward by signing a law that will raise the minimum wage across the state to \$15, finally giving working families the compensation we deserve. This victory is a sign of the power of the Fight for 15. As a teen worker who fought hard with young people across the state not to be left behind, I am proud that teen workers are included in the minimum wage hike. Our work has value and contributes to our families' income and allows us to save for college. We are thrilled to welcome Governor Murphy, Senate President Sweeney and Speaker Coughlin to our community center to sign the law, and are grateful for their leadership."

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