



News from the Fiscal Policy Institute

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New report

<http://bit.ly/1UFDII9>

\$15/Hour Would Raise Wages for 1.1 Million Immigrants Gains to Immigrants, U.S.-born Workers, and Small Businesses

Gradually raising the New York State minimum wage from its current level of \$9/hour to \$15/hour by 2019 in New York City and mid-2021 in the rest of the state would give a much-needed raise to 1.1 million immigrant workers, according to a report released today by the Fiscal Policy Institute.

Setting a wage floor at \$15/hour will disproportionately benefit immigrants, who are more likely to be in lower-wage jobs than their U.S.-born counterparts. Forty-three percent of all immigrants working in the state would get a raise, as would 36 percent of all workers.

“A phased-in \$15 minimum wage in New York will lift wages and living standards for 3.2 million New York workers without having an adverse impact on businesses or the state economy,” explained James Parrott, deputy director and chief economist of the Fiscal Policy Institute. “Solid research informed by a comprehensive understanding of labor markets and business operations shows that, factoring in productivity savings and reduced turnover, business operating costs would rise by no more than 7/10 of one percent.”

David Dyssegaard Kallick, director of FPI's Immigration Research Initiative, elaborated on the point: “Research shows a positive impact on local small businesses as customers have more money to spend, and since small businesses often already pay more than large companies. That's welcome news for immigrants, who are disproportionately likely to be low wage workers, and also disproportionately likely to be small business owners.”

“FPI’s new report shows clearly the true impact that raising our minimum wage to \$15 per hour would have on millions of New York immigrants,” said Steven Choi, executive director of the New York Immigration Coalition. “The effect for immigrant workers and their families is tremendous, allowing for a better quality of life, more economic activity and dollars in local and state tax coffers, and a more accessible upward economic ladder for immigrants across the state. FPI’s critical analysis has demonstrated clearly why New York State electeds should do the right thing for New York and raise the minimum wage.”

Héctor Figueroa, president of SEIU 32BJ, added: “Our members, many of whom are immigrants themselves, know what a difference earning a family-sustaining wage makes in their lives. Many of them also see their loved ones and neighbors struggling to get by on minimum wage. This is why the Fight for \$15 has been such a priority for our members, and why they continue to fight to make it a reality for all workers in New York. We need to ensure immigrant and non-immigrant workers are paid enough to support their families. This is the moral thing to do and it’s good for small business and our state economy.”

Daniel Cortés, a Make the Road New York member who immigrated to New York from Mexico, said: “I’ve lived in this country for 24 years and faced a constant struggle to support my three children with my minimum wage restaurant job. It’s so hard to live in such an expensive city on such low wages that I rarely get to see my kids, because I always have to be at work. Raising the minimum wage to \$15 would totally change my life—I could feed my family better and I could support my children's education by being there to help them with their schoolwork. It’s time for New York to follow the lead of many other places around the country and give workers the \$15 per hour we deserve.”

“As the Fiscal Policy Institute research shows, raising the minimum wage will directly benefit the 43% of immigrant New Yorkers disproportionately working in low-paying jobs, and help to spur economic growth in diverse communities throughout our state. If the state legislature is serious about lifting up Latino and immigrant families, and our overall economy, they will vote to raise the wage to \$15,” stated Jose Calderón, President of the Hispanic Federation.

The Fiscal Policy Institute (www.fiscalpolicy.org) is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit research and education organization committed to improving public policies and private practices to better the economic and social conditions of all New Yorkers. FPI’s Immigration Research Initiative looks at immigration issues in New York State and around the country.