



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Don't Hike Pay for Legislators, Raise the People's Pay

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY November 7, 2012

| ISSUE: **MINIMUM WAGE, GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, LEGISLATURE, JOBS & EMPLOYMENT**

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By SENATOR TIM KENNEDY

It's time for lawmakers to go on the record on pay raises. Over the last several weeks and months, I've made it clear I am opposed to pay hikes for state legislators. Now, I urge my colleagues to join me in working to restore the public's trust, rather than moving forward with their ill-conceived money grab.

With our economy now pressing forward along the road to recovery, lawmakers should be focused on economic issues and getting people back to work, not on bigger paychecks for themselves.

Instead of higher pay for legislators, the state should raise the minimum wage to help alleviate the financial hardships facing many working families. And we must finally approve legislation that ends wage discrimination and ensures equal pay for equal work.

Over my first two years in office, we've made progress in restoring the public's trust. That's why it's so important for us to stand up and oppose pay raises for legislators. To me, any formal talks surrounding a pay raise will represent an unthinkable return to the old ways of Albany self-interest.

Buffalo is bouncing back, Western New York is on the rise, and our economy is recovering. At times like these, we must remain focused on fostering economic growth and creating new jobs and opportunities for working families.

Since taking office, I've kept my aims on getting the economy back on track. My colleagues have joined me to fight for job creation initiatives like UB 2020, ReCharge NY and new infrastructure investments.

Now we need to come together again to tackle critical economic issues – stopping pay hikes for legislators, raising the minimum wage and ensuring equal pay for equal work.

There's been a lot of talk in the presidential election regarding pay equity and wage discrimination. The statistics are eye-opening: across the nation, women are paid on average only 77 cents compared to every dollar paid to a man. This needs to change.

It's an issue we must address at the state level. That's why I'm pushing for legislation to ensure all workers get equal pay when they do equal work, regardless of gender, race, age or nation of origin.

Economic issues like these must remain our top priority. Also on our economic agenda: my plan to establish Centers of Workforce Achievement, which will connect unemployed workers and new graduates to the hundreds of local jobs that go unfilled every month. Our proposal will partner community colleges with top local employers to develop a workforce with the skills needed in our regional economy.

We also need to stop jobs from being shipped overseas. That's why I've outlined a plan to prevent corporations from taking advantage of taxpayers if they send jobs offshore. Our legislation will discourage corporations from outsourcing jobs overseas and stimulate companies to bring jobs home.

Here's the bottom line: I'm urging my fellow state lawmakers to return their energies to job creation and economic growth and join me in standing up to stop any attempt to fleece taxpayers with legislative pay raises.

*This column was originally published in the **Cheektowaga Bee**, 10/25/12*