



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

Yonkers Times: WESTCHESTER ELECTED OFFICIALS JOIN SMALL BIZ OWNERS IN SUPPORT OF MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

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State Senator Shelley Mayer

Westchester small business owner Jessica Galen, owner of Bloomy Cheese & Provisions in Dobbs Ferry, spoke in support of raising the state minimum wage to \$21.25 plus indexing at a press conference today in White Plains with State Sen. Shelley Mayer, Assembly Members Chris Burdick and Steve Otis, and Westchester County Legislators Damon Maher, David Imamura, Erika Pierce and Terry Clements, as well as community leaders.

Galen is a member of the growing New York Business for a Fair Minimum Wage Coalition, which includes more than 300 businesses and business organizations across the state. The coalition is supporting the Raise the Wage Act, which would increase the minimum wage to \$21.25 and then index it annually to keep up with the cost of living, to be included in the final state budget.

Jessica Galen, owner of Bloomy Cheese & Provisions in Dobbs Ferry, said, "I see the fate of my business as inextricably linked to the wellbeing of my employees and our community. It's unacceptable and heartbreaking that so many neighbors in Westchester and around the state are struggling to make ends meet even with full-time jobs because of stagnating wages. If we want to sustain thriving, resilient communities, filled with strong, resilient small businesses, we must start by raising the wage floor. When people earn more, they spend more at local businesses, which

drives our economy forward. A higher minimum wage also means better employee retention and customer service. Our workforce is stronger. Our local businesses are stronger. Our tax base is stronger. Our communities are stronger. And our quality of life is better.”

Senator Shelley B. Mayer said, “I am proud to stand with my colleagues, workers, business owners, and supporters of the Raise the Wage Act. With the ever-increasing cost of living, the minimum wage of \$15 an hour, which was an important achievement, is no longer acceptable. Full-time employees earning the minimum wage in the New York suburbs simply cannot sustain themselves and their families. It is far too difficult to rent a one or two bedroom apartment, pay for utilities and other necessities at the current wage. Other states have demonstrated that raising the minimum wage brings greater prosperity to the state, businesses, and most importantly, people. It’s time to raise the wage to \$21.25 by 2026, and index it going forward, so that all New Yorkers can afford the basic necessities and allow their families to thrive and live with dignity.”

“We must include the Raise the Wage Act in our state budget. We need to have a livable wage. People shouldn’t have to work more than one full-time job just to put a roof over their heads and food on the table. This simply can’t wait,” said Assemblyman Chris Burdick.

Aishah Coleman, owner of AC Design & Development Corp. in New Rochelle, said, “Raising the minimum wage in New York will be good for workers and businesses alike. As a business owner, I can’t have my employees worried about whether they can make enough money to afford to have a good quality of life. Too many people are struggling to afford the basics, and that’s bad for our communities and the economy. Raising the minimum wage in New York means people will have more money in their pockets to spend at businesses and take care of their families.”

Assemblyman Steve Otis said, “With the rising cost of living and high inflation, it is important that the State take action to protect some of our most vulnerable New Yorkers by raising the minimum wage annually and providing for its enforcement. The minimum wage has not kept pace with inflation over the decades. I advocate for inclusion of this proposal in the state budget.”

Assemblywoman Dana Levenberg said, “There are people in our state working full-time hours and facing housing insecurity. We cannot expect people to continue to

work for wages that don't help them meet their basic needs. To retain the workers that power so much of our economy, we must raise New York's minimum wage and peg it to inflation."

Westchester County Legislators Terry Clements, David Imamura, Damon R. Maher, Catherine Parker, and Erika Pierce support the increase.

The Raise the Wage Act (S1978A and A2204A) would increase New York's minimum wage as follows: In New York City, Long Island and Westchester it would increase to \$17.25 on January 1, 2024; \$19.25 in 2025; \$21.25 in 2026; and \$21.25 plus indexing in 2027. In Western New York/Upstate it would increase to \$16 on Jan. 1, 2024; \$18 in 2025; \$20 in 2026; and \$21.25 plus indexing in 2027.

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