



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Suzi Oppenheimer

Oppenheimer Hails Assembly Passage of Bill Increasing Minimum Wage and Calls on Senate to do the Same

SUZI OPPENHEIMER June 8, 2012

| ISSUE: **LABOR, MINIMUM WAGE, JOBS & EMPLOYMENT**

Senator Suzi Oppenheimer (D-Mamaroneck) today applauded recent passage in the Assembly of a bill, A.9148, to increase the State's minimum wage and called on her Senate colleagues to do the same.

"This is a matter of economic fairness," said Senator Oppenheimer. "Throughout New York, hardworking men and women are struggling to make ends meet under our woefully inadequate minimum wage laws. Working class New Yorkers deserve to be paid a decent wage that will allow them to provide for their families' needs."

The Assembly bill would increase the minimum wage from \$7.25/hour to \$8.50 beginning on January 1, 2013. In subsequent years, the minimum wage would be indexed to the rate of inflation, as measured by the national Consumer Price Index. In 2010, more than a quarter of a million people in New York earned at or below the minimum wage. Full-time workers earning the minimum wage have less than \$300 per week to live on in New York. And despite the relatively high cost of living in the state, New York's minimum wage is less than that of three states that border New York.

Senator Oppenheimer supports similar legislation in the Senate. “Over the last five years, the minimum wage has only increased 10 cents per hour, while the cost of living for New Yorkers has skyrocketed,” said the Senator. “It’s high time that we help our working families.”

Oppenheimer rejected claims that increasing the minimum wage would have a detrimental impact on the state’s economy, noting that in both Massachusetts and Connecticut -- which recently raised the state minimum wage -- economic growth outpaced the national economy last year. Indeed, the ripple effects of raising the minimum wage on consumer spending would be significant, enough to create as many as 7,500 new jobs, according to some estimates. And while Oppenheimer favors measures to help small businesses in this tough economy, she stressed, “ensuring a living wage for hardworking New Yorkers should not be held hostage to other economic goals, however laudatory they may be. The time to act is now.”