



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

## Senator Kennedy Announces Minimum Wage Increasing December 31 for Local Workers

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY December 30, 2013

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*On December 31, New York State's minimum wage will rise to an hourly rate of \$8.00.*

*Kennedy: A higher minimum wage will help working families make ends meet and live a little more comfortably.*

BUFFALO, N.Y. – Senator Tim Kennedy, D-Buffalo, announced the minimum wage will rise to \$8 an hour tomorrow, December 31. Kennedy said this wage increase is the first of three raises that will result in minimum-wage workers earning \$9 an hour by the end of 2015. The

higher wages will be a welcome boost for workers and families in Western New York and across the state, says Kennedy who has helped lead the charge for raising the minimum wage.

The minimum wage hike set for tomorrow will be followed by additional increases in 2014 and 2015. On December 31, 2014, the minimum wage will climb up to \$8.75, and the rate will be bumped up again December 31, 2015 to \$9.

“This is a country and a state where we’ve always said, if you work hard and play by the rules, you can achieve the American Dream,” said Senator Tim Kennedy. “With so many families struggling with low and stagnant wages, this increase in the minimum wage will certainly help. It will help the growing number of New Yorkers who are working low-wage jobs these days – students working minimum-wage jobs to cover tuition costs, senior citizens trying to supplement depleted retirement savings, single parents relying on minimum-wage employment to care for children. Starting December 31, life will become a little bit easier for approximately 774,000 New Yorkers who are struggling to make ends meet.

“I’m proud to have supported increasing the minimum wage and will continue to do all I can to help hardworking New Yorkers achieve their fair share of the American dream,” Kennedy added. “Now more than ever, we need to ramp up our efforts to ensure working families have the opportunity to earn wages that will help them cover the constantly rising costs of raising a family.”

Approximately 224,000 workers were paid hourly wages at or below the minimum wage in 2012, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. However, the Fiscal Policy Institute estimates that about 774,000 New Yorkers – or about 9 percent of the workforce – will be impacted when the minimum wage increases to \$8 an hour.

Kennedy said a higher minimum wage is an important tool to help reduce poverty across the state. The city of Buffalo, in particular, is faced with a troublingly high poverty rate.

According to American Community Survey data, 44.9 percent of Buffalo children live in poverty, while the poverty rate for all Buffalo residents is at 30.9 percent.

“As the minimum wage rises, it will help lift families from poverty and boost local economic activity,” Kennedy said. “It will act as an economic stimulus by providing working-class families greater purchasing power to benefit local small businesses. This urgently-needed and long-overdue wage increase will help strengthen our economy by supporting the workers who fuel its growth.”

Kennedy has been a vocal advocate for improving the quality of life for working families in Western New York and across the state. He led efforts to help build momentum behind the movement to raise the minimum wage, and continues to urge Albany to take steps to help local families make ends meet.

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*Senator Timothy M. Kennedy represents the New York State Senate’s 63rd District, which is comprised of the town of Cheektowaga, the city of Lackawanna and nearly all of the city of Buffalo. More information is available at <http://kennedy.nysenate.gov>.*