



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

## NYS Senate Leader Rob Ortt & Senate Republicans Call To Preserve Jobs By Pausing Minimum Wage Increase

ROBERT G. ORTT December 10, 2020

| ISSUE: **CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC; SMALL BUSINESS; MINIMUM WAGE**



Albany, NY — New York State Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt and members of the Senate Republican Conference today called in a letter to Governor Andrew Cuomo for a pause to the minimum wage increases on Long Island, Westchester, and areas outside of New York City on December 31.

Small and medium-sized businesses across New York State continue to face unprecedented challenges this year, and are struggling to keep their doors open while keeping their employees on the payroll. In order to keep employees and customers safe, these struggling businesses have made significant investments, but they are barely making it.

“Our small businesses are hanging on by a thread and in order to help businesses stay open and keep all of their employees, we cannot add any additional financial hardship at this time. The Governor has the power to temporarily pause minimum wage increases and we urge him to do so until the end of the pandemic. We do not want our small businesses to make the difficult choice of laying off workers or closing their doors because this becomes the final straw during the financial fragility of the pandemic,” said Senate Republican Leader Ortt.

The National Federation of Independent Businesses (NFIB) found that 90% of small businesses which received Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans have entirely spent down those funds and are ready to begin the loan forgiveness process. The federal loan program was created to keep employees on the payroll, but even with this assistance and other programs, NFIB says 20% of small businesses believe they will shut down within six months. About 19% believe they will close within a year.

The scheduled increase to the minimum wage could make this crisis worse. But, the law allows for the temporary suspension of the increases based on a report and recommendation from the Governor’s Director of Budget. Postponing the increases until small and mid-sized businesses are on a sturdy financial footing post-pandemic will save jobs across the state.

###