



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

SERINO: SENATE SUCCESSFULLY PUSHES BACK AGAINST DRAMATIC WAGE INCREASE, SECURES WINS FOR MIDDLE CLASS

SUSAN SERINO April 1, 2016

| ISSUE: **BUDGET, MINIMUM WAGE**



THE 2016-2017
STATE BUDGET:

**A BETTER BUDGET
FOR FAMILIES**

**SERINO: SENATE SUCCESSFULLY PUSHES BACK AGAINST DRAMATIC WAGE
INCREASE, SECURES WINS FOR MIDDLE CLASS**

ALBANY, NY—Senator Sue Serino (R, C, I—Hyde Park) released the following statement regarding the passage of this year's state budget:

"I govern by listening and I have spent weeks carefully considering each and every aspect of this budget. The issue of a minimum wage increase is undoubtedly been the most contentious and it is one that I took directly to our community. Before arriving at a decision I met with businesses, community leaders, workers, neighbors and just about anyone who was willing to talk about it.

What I heard was that \$15 within five years, an unprecedented increase in minimum wage in our State, would likely translate to job loss among workers in our not for profits, schools, municipalities and local businesses. Understanding that many workers are struggling to make ends meet at the current minimum wage and deserve a higher wage, I sought a resolution that would work for our communities.

The proposal that passed today, coupled with the extensive tax cuts included in this year's budget, strikes a balance between what will work for businesses, farms and organizations in our communities and what workers need to afford to live in our area.

The proposal works as follows:

- For workers in our communities, the minimum wage will increase to \$9.70 at the end of this year;*
- It will continue to increase another \$0.70 per year until reaching \$12.50 on December 31, 2020;*
- The minimum wage will continue to increase to \$15 on an indexed schedule to be set by the Director of the Division of Budget (DOB) in consultation with the Department of Labor.*

Most importantly, the bill provides a safeguard that would prevent the wage from increasing should the economy take a turn for the worse. Beginning in 2019, the state DOB Director will be responsible for conducting an annual analysis of the economy in each region and will be charged with determining the effect of the minimum wage increases is having statewide to determine whether a temporary suspension of the scheduled increases may be necessary. Further, we have forced the Governor to suspend the Wage Board—a body that was making these decisions unilaterally and irresponsibly.

By slowing down the increase, providing for a study at the three-year mark that would determine whether the increase is to continue, and acknowledging regional differences, we have put forward a fiscally responsible compromise.

The passage of the bill also ushered in a new system for paid family leave which will allow individuals to take time away from work to care for an infant, a family member with a serious health condition, or to relieve family pressures for someone who is called to active military duty.

As the Chair of the Senate's Aging Committee, I know that this initiative has the potential to bring families together like never before. It is a win for our seniors, for our families and for our communities.

Most importantly, this year's budget includes significant and unprecedented tax cuts for middle class families by lowering the Personal Income Tax Rate—cuts that will save middle class taxpayers almost \$7 billion in the first four years alone.

At the start of this process, we had a budget proposal that was completely unworkable for our local communities. Despite a Governor and an Assembly unwilling to acknowledge the challenges facing our economy, we not only succeeded in slowing down the process to protect businesses, we reduced the impact of the increase and secured significant wins for our local families, taxpayers, schools and businesses.”