



Governor Signs Landmark Legislation to Raise California's Minimum Wage

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April 7, 2016

Both former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders have called for an increase of the federal minimum wage; the remaining Republican hopefuls for their party's nomination - Ohio Governor John Kasich, Texas Senator Ted Cruz, and reality TV star Donald Trump - have all gone on the record opposing such an increase.

New York's new law will also allow full-time employees to take a 12-week paid family leave when they have a baby.

For workers in New York City employed by businesses with at least 11 employees, the minimum wage would rise to \$11 at the end of 2016, then another \$2 each year after, reaching \$15 on December 31, 2018.

The new laws in California and NY mark the most ambitious moves yet by legislatures to close the national divide between rich and poor. Republicans at the federal and state levels resisted minimum wage increases and argued that they would increase costs to businesses and ultimately hurt low-wage workers.

Governor Jerry Brown signed legislation into law that that will raise California's minimum wage to \$15 an hour over the next six years.

Business groups fear the increase will cost thousands of jobs.

I am opposed to Gov. Jerry Brown's increase in California's minimum wage to \$15 an hour, as outlined in The Signal's March 30 "Business Owners: Minimum wage boost not well thought out".

Rob Lapsley, president of the California Business Roundtable, said in a prepared statement that raising the minimum wage could prove harmful in a state whose economic recovery has been uneven, with many areas still facing high unemployment. Beginning in 2018, workers will get eight weeks of leave at a pay rate of at least 50 percent of their average weekly wage, with a cap of 50 percent of the statewide average weekly wage.

A \$15 base wage will have "devastating impacts on small businesses in California", Tom Scott, executive director of the state branch of the National Federation of Independent Business, said in a statement.

The placards stacked outside the Ronald Reagan State Building said it *all*: "We Did It!"

"Wages are not keeping pace with the cost of living in California".

Citing research from the right-leaning CATO Institute, Lawson wrote in a brief last month that a 10 percent increase in the minimum wage would lead to half a percentage point reduction in the employment growth rate. The state's 2016-2017 budget will, in part, gradually increase the minimum wage from the current \$9 per hour to \$15 per hour.

It's a matter of economic justice, Brown said.

Raising the minimum wage has cropped up on many Democratic candidates' agendas ahead of the November elections in the hopes it could help mobilize voters. "They either lay workers off or they raise prices, but somebody somewhere has to pay the bills", McPheters said.

Wages will rise with inflation each year thereafter.

The minimum hikes came after years of strikes by fast food workers in major cities across the country, as well as a push to get more moderate Democratic politicians, such as Cuomo, to embrace these provisions.

Thompson reported from Sacramento, California.