



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 3, 2021

L&I Acting Secretary Joins Sen. Haywood and Restaurant Workers to Say \$2.83 an Hour is Not Enough to Survive

*Legislature urged to pass one fair minimum wage
67% of Pa. voters support raising the wage*

Harrisburg, PA – Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) Acting Secretary Jennifer Berrier joined Sen. Art Haywood and restaurant workers Samuel Jones, Nour Qutyan, James Conway, and Richard Gegick today to demand an increase in the minimum wage to \$12 an hour with a pathway to \$15 an hour, including for tipped workers who can be paid as little as \$2.83 per Pennsylvania law.

“\$2.83 an hour is simply not enough to survive today in Pennsylvania, where the living wage has been calculated to be more than \$11.50 an hour,” said Acting Secretary Berrier. “The ridiculously low tipped wage grants managers an unprecedented power to reward or punish workers with shifts, tables and tasks that can make or break bank accounts. This has fostered an environment where racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination can flourish. We need to eliminate the \$2.83 tipped wage and ensure every Pennsylvania worker is earning at least \$12 an hour for their hard work.”

Gov. Tom Wolf’s proposal to raise the minimum wage to \$12 an hour with a pathway to \$15 by 2027 will boost incomes for nearly 1.1 million workers and put \$4.4 billion into the pockets of Pennsylvania workers in the first year. These workers will stimulate local economies in Pennsylvania through spending, with a minimum wage increase to \$15 boosting Pennsylvania’s economy by \$321 million in 2027.

Raising the wage has strong public support. A Franklin & Marshall College poll released in March found [67 percent of registered Pennsylvania voters support raising the minimum wage to \\$12 an hour](#) as the governor is proposing.

Eight other states are on path to \$15, including red states. In the November 2020 election, voters in Florida – which has a Republican governor and legislature and voted for President Trump – passed a constitutional amendment to raise its minimum wage to \$15 by 2026.

Twenty-nine other states, including every state that borders Pennsylvania, have raised the minimum wage above the federally mandated rate of \$7.25 an hour. Additionally, last week, President Joe Biden signed an executive order increasing the minimum wage to federal contractors and tipped employees to \$15 an hour, ensuring all workers serving the federal government earn a fair living wage.

Eliminating the tipped worker and providing one fair wage to all workers will directly benefit 65 percent of tipped workers and help reduce sexual harassment and discrimination. Two-thirds of tipped workers in Pennsylvania are women.

“Pennsylvania's minimum wage has not been raised in over a decade. Every surrounding state has a higher minimum wage than Pennsylvania,” said ROC United member James Conway, who calculated he earned \$200,000 less during his 35-year restaurant career than he would have if the tipped wage was equal to the minimum wage. “We need to raise the wage. We need to eliminate the subminimum wage of \$2.83 per hour for tipped restaurant workers, and we need to pay all tipped workers one fair wage!”

Eight states have eliminated the tipped minimum wage and have one fair wage for everyone: Alaska, California, Hawaii, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Oregon, and Washington. An additional 19 states have a tipped minimum wage that is higher than Pennsylvania.

MEDIA CONTACT: Sarah DeSantis, dlipress@pa.gov

#