

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Senators

FROM: Senator Christine Tartaglione

DATE: January 30, 2019

SUBJECT: Introduction of comprehensive modernization of the Minimum Wage

In the near future, I intend to introduce partnering legislation that will immediately raise Pennsylvania's minimum wage to \$12/hour for all Pennsylvania workers, with a pathway to \$15/hour by 2025; creating one fair wage in Pennsylvania.

Vital members of our community, such as child care and home health workers, bank tellers, construction workers, retail and hospitality workers who work full-time while making the minimum wage only earning \$15,080/year. These are some of our most fundamental jobs in our Commonwealth, yet because they earn our current minimum wage they cannot afford basic necessities such as rent, transportation, food and prescriptions. Many are forced to rely on public assistance to get by. The inability for hard-working people to care for their basic needs, or those of their families, is morally wrong and is economically unsound.

All surrounding states have increased their minimum wage rates, leaving Pennsylvania behind. On January 1 alone, 18 states saw increases, either automatic or planned. Pennsylvania has not updated its minimum wage since 2006, and as a result we now maintain the lowest allowable rate in the country. Keeping people in poverty is not how we move Pennsylvania forward.

My legislation will help raise citizens out of poverty, save state tax dollars as people are less reliant on public assistance, and reinvest a portion of the savings in state-supported child care and subsidized homecare for seniors and people with disabilities. Even after reinvestments, my legislation will still save \$36 million next year and almost \$120 million the following year without raising taxes or growing state government.

Accordingly, my comprehensive legislation modernizes protections and enforcement standards in the law, by:

- Eliminating the preemption on municipal wage ordinances, which ties the hands of our local governments.
- Guarding against wage theft by ensuring that the Department of Labor & Industry may recover wages and penalties for all violations of the act, not just when a complaint is filed.
- Increasing monetary penalties for violations, which in some cases have not been updated since 1968.
- Bringing enforcement in line with the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act by allowing workers to receive damages, in addition to unpaid wages.
- Requiring the Department of Human Services to calculate and publish the impact of a minimum wage increase on its programs, and mandate that savings be used to increase child care and

home and community-based services to ensure that these providers are able to pay the increased minimum wage.

Representative Patty Kim in introducing companion legislation in the House of Representatives.

Please join me in sponsoring this vital legislation and help raise Pennsylvania's wage to one fair wage for all workers.