

The Connecticut General Assembly

House Democrats



For IMMEDIATE Release

April 27, 2017

REP. EDWIN VARGAS PUSHES MINIMUM WAGE BILL

State Representative Edwin Vargas (D-Hartford) and colleagues are pushing for passage of a minimum wage increase this session.

Rep. Vargas, along with a number of lawmakers, has led the fight on behalf of Connecticut workers who are struggling to make ends meet in minimum wage jobs.

House Bill [6208](#), which has 23 co-sponsors, is ready for action in the House of Representatives.

“The time to make this happen is now,” **Rep. Vargas** said. “Long gone are the fallacies of minimum wage workers being the young high school and college students. We have to face the reality that in today’s economic climate, more and more families are forced to take minimum wage jobs in order to bring food to the table.”

“Eighty-nine percent of the people that will benefit from the minimum wage increase are not teenagers, they’re on average 36 years of age. Fifty-seven percent of these people work full time and 37 percent of them are over 40 years old,” Labor Committee Chair **Senator Ed Gomes** (D-Bridgeport) said. “People cannot exist on less than \$15 an hour and the families who are currently working on minimum wage salaries are living in poverty. There needs to be an increase.”

Connecticut has been a leader in defending and passing a historic minimum wage increase in 2014. As of January 2017, the minimum wage is \$10.10 per hour.

“Every day, thousands of working people go to work at full-time jobs but struggle to support their families,” said **Lori J. Pelletier**, President of the Connecticut AFL-CIO, which represents over 220,000 workers in the state. “Earning the current minimum wage,

these workers are frequently forced to make tough decisions about what basics they can afford and which ones they cannot – essentials like food, housing, clothing, and medicine. Some must even rely on public assistance to make ends meet, which means taxpayers are subsidizing unscrupulous low wage employers. I think we can all agree that no one who works full-time should have to live in poverty.”

Vargas noted, “Our constituents in the inner cities who are heads of households have to work two or three jobs to support their families, many of whom are employed by big box employers that offer zero benefits and underpay them, leaving it to the state to subsidize their most basic needs. We must give our workers a decent pay so that they are not living in poverty despite working full time jobs.”

The 2017 Legislative Session ends June 7.

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