City Council Motion Creates Path to $15.25 Minimum Wage in Los Angeles

As a motion was introduced Tuesday in the Los Angeles City Council to raise the city's minimum wage to $13.25 by 2017 and study a path to $15.25 by 2019, the National Employment Law Project released a policy brief examining recent trends and economic evidence on local minimum wages. The paper summarizes evidence that shows local minimum wages have proven to be effective tools for raising pay and improving job quality without reducing employment or encouraging businesses to leave cities.

The following statement on the LA City Council's move can be attributed to Christine L. Owens, executive director of the National Employment Law Project:

“Tuesday's motion introduced in the Los Angeles City Council to raise the city's minimum wage to $13.25 by 2017 and look for a path to $15.25 by 2019 is the latest sign the movement for higher wages sweeping the country can't be stopped. Last week it was New York City, and this week it's Los Angeles moving towards $15 and beyond—increases that will change workers' lives for the better.

"As the drive for higher pay sweeps the nation, $15, once laughed at as unrealistic, is increasingly becoming reality—both via higher minimum wages in Seattle and, soon, in San Francisco, and via collective bargaining agreements in places like Baltimore and Los Angeles. It started as a rallying cry of striking fast-food workers, but more and more, $15 being taken up by cities across the country, which aren't waiting for Washington to raise pay.

"The unbalanced economic recovery, compounded by continued Congressional gridlock over raising the federal minimum wage, has prompted a record number of local leaders over the past year to propose and adopt city minimum wage ordinances that substantially raise the wage floor for low-paid workers and their families. The cities are making the right moves, as all the evidence shows that higher wages boost earnings without slowing job growth or leading to business relocations."

If you wish to speak to a NELP expert about the new L.A. City Council proposal, or the broader trend examined in the policy brief of cities raising wages, please contact Emma Stieglitz at emmaS@berlinrosen.com or 646-200-5307.

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