

Coalition for a Real Minimum-Wage Increase

Chinese Staff & Workers Association, Community Development Project – Urban Justice Center,
Flushing Workers Center, Hunger Action Network, MFY Legal Services, National Mobilization Against SweatShops

Press advisory
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Workers, labor and advocacy groups demand of Cuomo: real minimum-wage increase and labor-law enforcement

Workers detail rampant wage theft & weak labor-law enforcement; call on Cuomo to raise minimum wage for tipped workers, repeal his corporate subsidies

What: Press Conference
When: Thursday, May 30, 12 noon
Where: In front of Governor Cuomo's Office, 633 3rd Ave. (40 – 41 St.), Manhattan

Low-wage workers from the restaurant, nail salon, car service and other trades, together with labor and advocacy organizations, will call on Governor Cuomo to take immediate action to ensure that all workers in New York receive a real increase in the minimum wage. Tipped workers will describe the rampant violations of minimum wage and other labor laws, the impossibilities of making ends meet even if one receives the current minimum wage, and the weak response from government enforcement agencies.

The NY State Department of Labor says that there is a backlog of two years for minimum-wage and overtime-pay complaints from workers. Recent reports indicate that low-income workers in New York City alone may lose \$1 billion a year to such violations. Workers will speak at the press conference about their difficulties recouping owed wages. The Coalition for a Real Minimum-Wage Increase will also announce the submission of a FOIL request to the NY State Department of Labor for information about its enforcement activities and policies.

Workers and labor and advocacy organizations will make specific demands of Cuomo to right the wrongs of the minimum-wage bill that he signed last month. This new law will enrich employers and corporations to the detriment of workers. It excludes hundreds of thousands of tipped workers from receiving an increase; 72% are women and many are immigrants and people of color. It does not allocate any resources for labor-law enforcement to investigate workers' complaints of employers' failure to pay minimum wage. Instead, Cuomo's law subsidizes employers and corporations with millions of dollars to hire young workers, pitting the young against the old. In addition, Cuomo's raising of the minimum wage to only \$9 in three years is too little, too late. It undermines current national efforts to raise the federal minimum wage to at least \$9 next year.

Other campaign endorsers include Asian American Legal Defense & Education Fund, Flushing Greens, Judeotutor Services (Rabbi Neal Kaunfer), Ray Korona Band, Walker Memorial Baptist Church (Rev. Derrick Boykin), West Side Campaign Against Hunger, and Xavier Mission.

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