



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Nearly 300,000 Workers Age 40 and Older Would Get Pay Boost from Minimum Wage Increase

*More than a quarter of workers getting a raise are age 40 or older*

**Harrisburg, PA** – Dispelling the harmful stereotype that hardworking and experienced adults will not benefit from a minimum wage increase, Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) Acting Secretary Jennifer Berrier joined Senator Nikil Saval, a Westmoreland County home health aide and Giant Eagle worker today to call on the legislature to raise the wage to \$12 an hour with a pathway to \$15.

“While we so often hear minimum wage workers portrayed as ‘teenage burger flippers,’ the reality is more than a quarter of the Pennsylvanians who would benefit from an increase in the minimum wage to \$15 an hour are over age 40,” said Acting Secretary Berrier. “Despite years of experience, these Pennsylvanians often struggle to afford necessities like food and housing. It’s well past time that we pay all hardworking Pennsylvanians a fair, livable wage.”

Governor Tom Wolf’s proposal to raise the minimum wage to \$12 an hour with a pathway to \$15 by 2027 will benefit working families, directly raise incomes for more than 1.1 million workers and add \$4.4 billion to the state’s economy. About 300,000 of these workers are age 40 or older.

“In a country as rich as the United States, that people work full time and still cannot afford to meet their basic needs is reprehensible,” said Senator Saval. “We must increase the minimum wage and allow working people the means to care for themselves and their families. Workers deserve jobs that will treat them with dignity and respect, and this starts, at the very least, by paying them wages that are truly livable.”

“The minimum wage affects everyone, not just younger workers,” said Voices of Westmoreland Member Sandy Brozik-Zilen. “We need to raise the wage so that everyone in our community can thrive and help our communities in Westmoreland County start to grow again.”

### **Strong Public Support**

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](#) 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. President Biden also recently took executive action to increase the minimum wage for federal contractors and tipped employees to \$15. Overall, 29 other states, including every state that borders Pennsylvania, have raised the minimum wage above \$7.25 an hour. Findings from the Keystone Research Center show those who would benefit from a \$15 minimum wage include:

- 62% are women;
- 76% are age 20 or older;
- 27% are age 40 or older;
- 13% are age 55 or older;
- 38% are working fulltime; and
- 22% are parents.

**Workers keep their jobs as states raise the minimum wage.**

A Federal Reserve Bank of New York study found that as New York state gradually raising its minimum wage to \$15, wages are increasing without jobs losses. Low-wage workers living in New York along the Pennsylvania border saw their pay increase by more than 25 percent, while the wages of Pennsylvania workers in the northern tier rose only 15 percent.

Rural workers gain the most from raising the minimum wage. The highest percentage of workers getting a raise with a \$15 minimum wage are in 29 rural counties.

Since the last time the minimum wage was increased, its purchasing power has dropped by nearly 17 percent. Rural workers gain the most from raising the minimum wage. The highest percentage of workers getting a raise with a \$15 minimum wage are in 29 rural counties, according to findings from the Keystone Research Center.

Voices of Westmoreland (VOW) is a grassroots people-powered effort that provides opportunities for all people to get involved in the political process and to take collective action. VOW focuses on issues that are important to residents of Westmoreland County: healthcare, clean air and water, living wages, racial justice, education, and fair government. VOW is a chapter of [Pennsylvania United](#), which builds membership-based chapters in small cities and towns across Western PA.

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