

MARCH NEWSLETTER - 2016

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Sometimes an idea that sounds good in theory has exactly the opposite affect when it becomes reality. Governor Andrew Cuomo's crusade to increase the minimum wage to \$15 per hour by 2021 is a perfect example. While the governor proclaims that a \$15 per hour minimum wage would lift New Yorkers out of poverty and stimulate the economy, the reality is it would hurt not only most small businesses and non-profit organizations but many of the workers it was intended to help.

Your Genesee County Chamber of Commerce surveyed its membership to see how they felt about the proposed increase to a \$15 minimum wage. Seventy-five percent of the respondents were opposed to the increase. Here is a sampling of their comments:

- "If the \$15 wage does go into effect, we have 5 part-time employees we would have to let go and would not be able to hire 10 seasonal employees."
- "Many family businesses already operate on tight margins. To increase the minimum wage to \$15 will reduce margins that much more. Some businesses may go under or reduce employee hours or increase the cost of their products which will hurt the business."
- "I have no idea, as a not for profit, how we would be able to stay in business."
- "Increasing the minimum wage to \$15 per hour will only drive more business out of New York State, won't encourage new business and will increase prices, causing inflation. There is NO god reason to allow this to happen."

The Genesee County Chamber's mission is to create an environment for business success which will enhance the quality of life for the citizens of Genesee County. We believe that the proposed \$15 minimum wage would have an adverse effect on both the businesses and citizens of Genesee County.

Poverty is an important issue both locally and nationally but your Chamber believes there are better ways to deal with this issue. Increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit and allowing counties in New York State to set their own local minimum wage levels would both help to increase living standards while not hurting local businesses.

The Governor has placed a high priority on this issue which is why it is important to keep spotlighting the devastating and unintended consequences that a \$15 minimum would have on business in New York State. The Genesee County Chamber of Commerce, in conjunction with other Chambers of Commerce and statewide agencies such as The Business Council of New York and the Empire Center for Public Policy, are committed to spreading the word of the harmful effects of this proposed policy. Look for more to follow in the coming months.

Sincerely,

Tom Turnbull

Chamber President