



**Greece Chamber of Commerce Position Statement:  
Proposed New York State Minimum Wage Increase  
January 15, 2016**

The Greece Chamber of Commerce has serious concerns regarding New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo's recent proposed increase in minimum wage to \$15 an hour, up from the newest increase to \$9 an hour, which just went into effect on December 31, 2015. Increasing minimum wage by more than 60%, especially on the heels of an increase each year for the last three years, is dramatic and unreasonable, creating a heavy burden for both small and large businesses and making it likely that they will cut back on employment in order to manage this significant payroll expense increase.

While we strongly support fair wages and the creation of good-paying jobs, and support the Governor's desire to make sure that workers in New York State earn a living wage, we see the potential for this legislation to ultimately hurt businesses and, by extension, their employees. Certainly, a \$15 minimum wage in New York State, compared to a \$7.25 minimum wage nationally, will also add to the business expenses that make our state less competitive when trying to retain and attract businesses.

Given the precarious nature of our local and regional economy and the continued exodus of business and population from our urban areas, this is a particularly bad moment for imposing yet another expensive government mandate that costs localities and the private sector significant dollars with no government assistance or relief to soften the blow.

The Greece Chamber of Commerce calls for a more reasonable and gradual phasing in of future minimum wage increases, along with broader public input, consideration of significant cost of living variances across our state – particularly between downstate and upstate – and a more fully developed plan to help businesses and employers manage the complexities of increasing wages for lower-level jobs, which typically require a rethinking and restructuring of organizational salaries across the board to create pay equity for employees inside each organization. We need to help employers plan for costs and economic shifts that – while aimed at jobs for entry-level, less skilled workers – ultimately impact every employer and employee. We need to find ways to create assistance and incentives for businesses to help them support a well-compensated, robust and competitive workforce.

Sarah E. Lentini  
President and CEO  
Greece Chamber of Commerce