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ALBANY, NY - In response to [reporting on a minimum wage development in budget negotiations](#), State Senator Jessica Ramos issued the following statement:

“New Yorkers have been extremely clear: the cost of living in New York has become untenable. In response, I’ve championed the Raise the Wage Act - a [deeply vetted](#) and [widely popular](#) piece of legislation that will restore the eroded value of New York’s minimum wage and make sure it never falls behind again.

The numbers reported yesterday do not actually give most workers a raise at all. Most employers across our state have responded to the worker shortage by raising their starting wages for typical low-wage workers to \$17.70 downstate and \$17.50 upstate.

This insult is compounded by the Earned Income Tax Credit phase-out. A person making \$15 an hour whose wages rise to \$16 makes approximately \$2,080 before state and federal taxes. After taxes and tax credits, that additional pay only comes out to \$980 - that’s an effective 53% tax rate. Are we, as a legislative body, comfortable with responding to the affordability crisis by giving minimum wage workers a higher marginal tax rate than the ultra-rich?

When New York last raised the minimum wage, we had a Republican-controlled Senate and we still managed to set the national standard. New York sets the bar that used to lift the rest of the country up. A \$17 wage puts us behind other comparable high-cost-of-living cities like Seattle, San Francisco, and Washington DC, which will all have minimum wages at or around \$20 by 2026. But it will also put us behind smaller cities with substantially lower costs of living, like Tukwila, Washington and Flagstaff, Arizona.

We can do better.”

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