



our Governor and State Assembly a push to raise the minimum wage. Governor Cuomo was pushing for \$11.50 in New York City and \$10.50 for the rest of the state. Our State Assembly put forth a similar plan, but they included Long Island in the higher wage tier because the cost of living is so high that they said that it should be included in a higher tier with New York City. They also proposed allowing local governments to have control to raise the wage up to 30% above the state minimum. In places across the state where the cost of living is high, local governments can say, “Hey, you know, this is not enough,” and they can raise the wage up to 30% more.

But our State Senate proposal was

for anything. So a lot of people end up understanding that this fight—you can get fired in the fast-food industry anyway, and they end up saying, “Well, I’m going to fight anyway no matter what they do to me.”

Student: If the wages are increased to \$15, it would make sense that employers would re workers and even hire less people. What are your viewpoints and thoughts on that?

OS: Sure. You know, there’re a lot of reports by economists on what happens when you raise the wage, and in almost all of the cities where the wages have already been raised, it’s actually found that there’s been job growth. So I think it’s a misconception that if you raise wages, then companies are going to automatically have to fire workers. I think actually the opposite is happening in a lot of cities.

Sharryn Kasmir: Los Angeles is one of the places where it’s been looked at closely. What you see is that people who earn at the bottom of the wage tier spend their money in their communities on goods and services. So it tends to have a positive impact on the local economy in that way, whereas when people at the upper end of the wealth spectrum get more money, it doesn’t go back into the communities. You don’t see that trickle-down effect that you might expect. It’s really more a trickle-up effect from the lowest earners.

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