







lynchings in America's racial history. The EEOC has handled 25 noose cases in the past 18 months, 'something that only came along every 2 or 3 years before,' says Ida L. Castro, outgoing EEOC chairwoman."

New York has been very much part of that trend, in both its public and private sectors. New evidence came in July, when the Federal Government took the unusual step of suing the Giuliani administration for allowing hostile work environments for women,



legislative proposal to do the same in New York. Surprisingly, the state's minimum was stuck at \$4.25 from 1991 to March 2000. As many as 375,000 New Yorkers are not covered by the federal law because they are employees of small firms without interstate commerce or are counted as seasonal workers. New York was among a minority of states across the country that failed to raise the state minimum wage after the federal minimum was increased in 1996. Though increases in the state rate have repeatedly been passed by the Democratic majority in the state Assembly, they failed to clear the Republican-run Senate until 1999. Since March 31, 2000, the state minimum has been \$5.15 per hour and when the federal minimum wage is raised in coming years, the state minimum will automatically match the increase.

This June, over 80 New York-based economists, including professors from Columbia, Cornell, CUNY, Hofstra and SUNY, endorsed the NY State Assembly bill to increase the state minimum wage to \$6.75 an hour. The economists' letter read, in part:

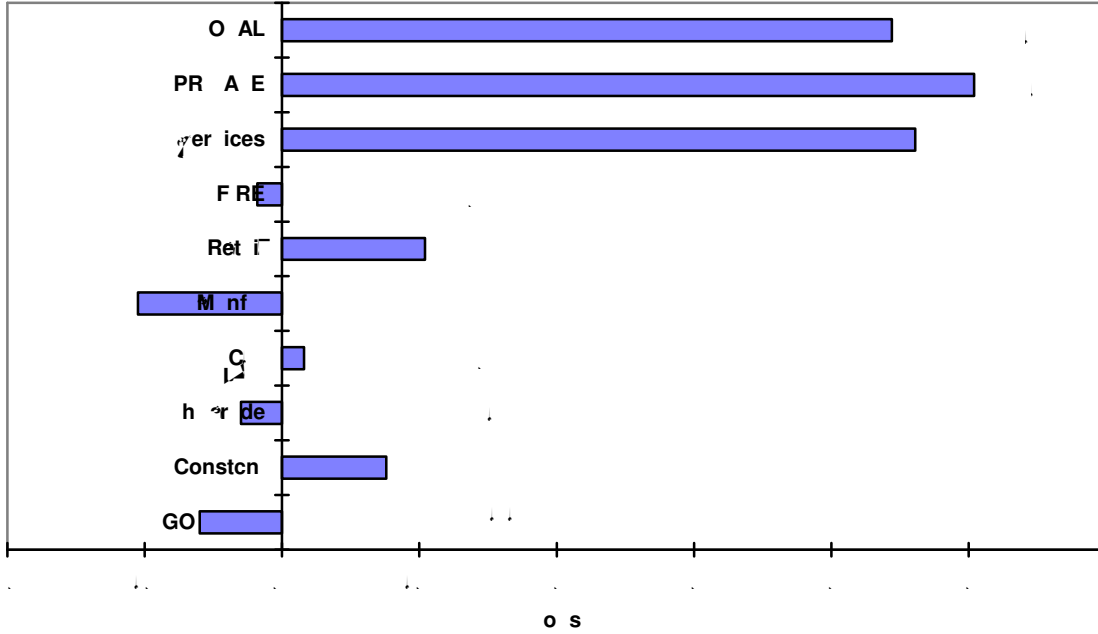
Increasing the minimum wage to \$6.75 in 2002 and tying further increases to the regional Consumer Price Index will significantly raise income for over 1 million New York workers. Most of the beneficiaries are adults, most are female, and the vast majority are members of low-income working families. This increase is certainly affordable in light of the fact that in 1968 the minimum wage was equivalent to well over \$7.00 an hour expressed in current dollars, compared to \$5.15 an hour now.

By increasing its minimum wage, New York would join a growing list of states where voters and political leaders have chosen to take control over wage policy rather than wait for Congress to act at the federal level. There are now ten states plus the District of Columbia with minimum wage levels above the current \$5.15 federal level, including four neighbors: Vermont (\$6.25), Massachusetts (\$6.75), Connecticut (\$6.70 as of 2002), and Rhode Island (\$6.15). These states hold in common a high level of average income and a high cost of living, two factors that favor a state minimum higher than the inadequate national floor. In its 1999 Economic Report of the President, the Council of Economic Advisors remarked that "the weight of the evidence suggests that modest increases in the minimum wage have had very little or no effect on employment."

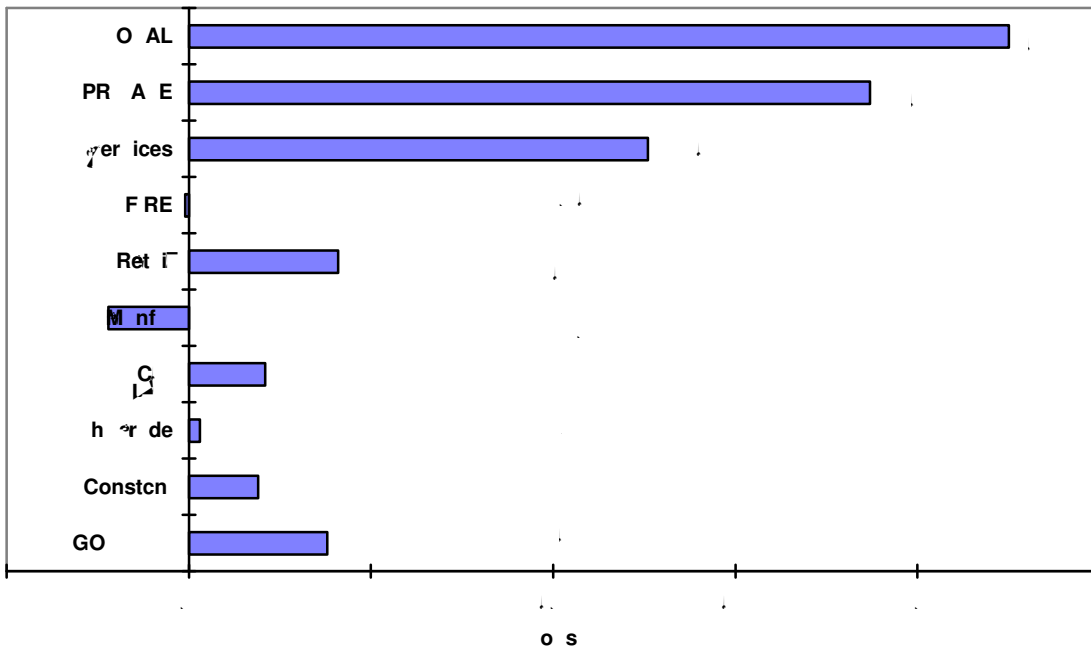
This spring, a widely publicized 3-week student sit-in at Harvard demanded that the wealthy university improve the pay of its low-wage janitorial staff by paying them a "living wage." The basic aim of such proposals is to reward the work of low-wage populace by ensuring that they earn at least enough to keep their families above the official poverty line (\$17,029 for a family of four, or at least \$8.19 per hour for those able to find a full-time,



NYC Industry and Service Sector Employment



National Industry and Service Sector Employment



Source: NY State Department of Labor. FIRE = Finance, Insurance, Real Estate; TCU = Transport, Communications, Utilities. Year-to-year changes, not seasonally adjusted.



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ne p oy e	All Ages 16 & Up	Males	Females	White, Non-Span	Black, Non-Span	Spanish Origin	Teens, 16-19	Foreign Born
NYC	5.4	5.2	5.6	2.7	8.8	7.9	15.6	4.7
Big Cities	5.6	5.6	5.6	3.6	10.1	5.9	18.1	4.5
Nass/Suff.	3.6	4.8	2.1	3.2	4.2	4.3	10.2	5.6
Suburbs	3.8	4.1	3.5	3.3	5.6	6.4	11.6	4.2

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NYC	55.6	64.2	48.6	58.5	51.8	52.9	20.3	59.1
Big Cities	64.3	71.6	57.6	68.6	56.4	65.0	36.4	65.1
Nass/Suff.	61.4	66.3	56.6	61.5	59.7	62.3	36.7	55.8
Suburbs	66.6	73.5	60.1	66.3	69.0	66.1	44.4	66.0

nde e p e											
NYC	15.77	5.77	15.77	(m)25.77	12(p)1.78	326(l)0.89	1628(o)-6.02	41(y.4(-)5087.)-3.01	205(1)-6.02	416(-)3316.27	(4)-6