



Press Release

Office of Mayor Sam T. Liccardo

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South Bay Mayors Launch Minimum Wage Effort

Leaders Back Study as First Step Towards Raising Minimum Wage Across Region

San José, CA - Mayor Sam Liccardo was joined by the Mayors of Campbell, Palo Alto, Cupertino, Milpitas, Morgan Hill, Monte Sereno, and a representative from the City of Santa Clara today to announce the first steps towards potentially raising the minimum wage across Santa Clara County. To begin this joint venture, the Mayors backed a regional study of the long term economic impacts increasing the minimum wage would have on minimum wage earners, small businesses, and the unemployed.

“In this period of affluence, Santa Clara County leads the nation in job growth, yet ample evidence demonstrates a growing gap between rich and poor,” said Mayor Sam Liccardo. “We have to do more to help those dependent on a minimum wage, but we need to proceed in a thoughtful manner that lifts the tide for all residents.”

“Cities along the West Coast are passing a higher minimum wage to give their residents a chance to keep up with their rent. It’s time we consider the impacts doing the same here in Santa Clara County,” said Mayor Jeffrey Christina of Campbell.

The City of San José will take the lead on beginning the Request for Proposal process to hire a consultant to conduct the study. To ensure that the diverse opinions and expertise of Santa Clara County are represented, members of the South Bay Labor Council and the San Jose/Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce will join other key stakeholders and subject matter experts in evaluating the RFP and selecting best qualified consultant(s) who will conduct the study.

“Perhaps nowhere more than this, where we all live in such close proximity to each other and where we share a regional economy are each city’s actions likely to have effect on other cities,” said Palo Alto Mayor Karen Holman. “I’m gratified this effort is commencing to work together to identify a minimum wage approach that can help address the gap between those who struggle to live here and those who flourish.”

“The need is clear. The minimum wage must be increased so that our residents can live the comfortable lives they’ve strived so hard for,” said Mayor Jose Esteves of Milpitas. “We also have to move forward in a pragmatic way that allows the small business in our region to continue to provide the jobs necessary to sustain our economic growth.”

In addition to studying the economic impacts of raising the minimum wage, the study would also seek to assess the benefits of several other proposals including:

- A training wage for youth under 18
- An exemption for organizations employing person who ware “hard-to-employ” such as parolees, the homeless, and emancipated foster youth.
- A “ramp-up” period for small business, such as employers with less than 15 employees or who earn below a predetermined threshold of gross revenue
- An exemption for the employment of immediate or extended family members

“The working poor in our region have been particularly hit by the large and growing income inequality gap, and the minimum wage is one of several tools we need. I support an objective economic study to understand the impact on jobs and business, followed by a common regional approach,” said Cupertino Mayor Rod Sinks.

Today’s event comes on the heels of San José’s Rules and Open Government Committee’s approval of a memo by Mayor Liccardo, and Councilmembers Chappie Jones and Manh Nguyen proposing the regional study of the possible effects of an minimum wage increase. The RFP proposal will next go to the full City Council for approval. In the past, the Cities Association has endorsed a regional approach to raising the minimum wage to avoid having different rules in different areas of the county.

“Too many times we’ve seen localities raise the minimum wage without carefully considering how it’s increase effects all aspects of our economy,” said Morgan Hill Mayor Steve Tate. “This is the first time a group of mayors have joined together and said that we need to do this collectively.”

“A regional approach to raising the minimum wage is essential to providing equity when it comes to business growth throughout Santa Clara County. Different rules for different cities creates an uneven playing field that can be damaging to local economics. Today we’ve taken the first step towards ensuring all residents feel a positive impact from any minimum wage increase,” said Mayor Walter Huff of Monte Sereno.

“Mountain View has been leading the effort for a regional approach and look forward to hearing where all our neighbors are on the issue,” said Mayor John McAlister of Mountain View.

"Many cities throughout the County, including Santa Clara, have recognized the need for local government to step forward to increase the minimum wage. The next logical step is to work to create regional consistency for future increases to amplify our efforts and wage predictability for individuals and business," said Santa Clara Mayor Jamie Matthews.

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