

The New York Times

U.S.

Los Angeles Closes In on Approving \$15 Minimum Wage

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JUNE 3, 2015, 4:11 P.M. E.D.T.

LOS ANGELES — The City Council voted 13-1 on Wednesday to raise the minimum wage in Los Angeles to \$15 an hour by 2020, but a second vote is required for final approval because the tally was not unanimous.

Nonetheless, Council President Herb Wesson stressed to the cheering crowd that the outcome was all but certain. He told his council colleagues before the vote that it may be the most important one of their political careers.

"The winds in this country do blow from the west to the east, and cities throughout the United States will watch what we do and they will do the same," he said. "So the action that we're taking today will affect millions."

The ordinance also has the endorsement of Mayor Eric Garcetti.

The increases would begin with a wage of \$10.50 in July 2016, followed by annual increases to \$12, \$13.25, \$14.25 and then \$15. Small businesses and nonprofits would be a year behind.

Before the vote, representatives of the business community warned of harmful effects from an increase while workers urged passage of the ordinance.

Calls for raising the minimum wage have grown as the nation struggles with fallout from the recession, worsening income inequality, persistent poverty and the challenges of immigration and the global economy.

Los Angeles would join Seattle and San Francisco as some of the largest cities in the nation with phased-in minimum wage laws that eventually require annual pay of about \$31,200 for a full-time job.

Last year, Chicago passed a phased-in minimum wage increase to \$13 an hour.

Earlier this week, the California Senate approved a plan to raise the statewide minimum wage again, lifting it to \$13 an hour in 2017 and tying it to the rate of inflation after that.

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio has said he also wants to boost his city's lowest hourly pay to \$15.

In Los Angeles, some business leaders had expressed concern about potential amendments to the wage increase proposal that have been suggested over the past several weeks. The changes include an exemption for companies with unionized workforces and a mandate that companies give workers as many as 12 paid days off a year.

The mayor has declined to say whether he supported either amendment.

The final vote is set for June 10.