

Polls: N.J. voters overwhelmingly support minimum wage hike

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Senate President Stephen Sweeney (D-Gloucester) is shown in this file photo. Sweeney successfully pushed to get a minimum wage hike on the ballot in November. *(Tony Kurdzuk/The Star-Ledger)*

TRENTON — A question on the November ballot asking New Jersey voters whether to raise the minimum wage looks well on its way towards passage, [according to two new polls](#).

A Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press poll released this morning found that 65 percent of 674 registered voters said they support a constitutional amendment on the ballot Nov. 5 that would raise the minimum wage to \$8.25 and then yearly based on the Consumer Price Index. Just 12 percent opposed it, and 22 percent were undecided.

And a Rutgers-Eagleton poll of 568 likely voters released this afternoon found voters support the question by a 76 percent to 22 percent margin.

In the Monmouth University poll, a plurality — 41 percent — said they would support raising the wage to \$10.50, which would be equivalent to its buying power in the 1960s. Thirty-one percent opposed a wage hike that large.

But fast food workers' demands [made at protests in other parts of the country](#) to raise the wage to \$15 were only supported by 16 percent of Garden State voters.

Seventy-four percent of Democrats support the measure to raise the wage to \$8.25, as do 63 percent of independents and 54 percent of Republicans.

And 67 percent said they disagreed with business groups' contention — expressed in a [ad campaign begun over the](#)

[summer](#) by a business-funded advocacy group — that the wage hike would cost thousands of jobs.

“The minimum wage amendment is set to pass by a substantial margin. New Jersey voters simply do not accept the business community’s prediction of dire consequences,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute

A sizable number — 33 percent — said the wage hike would hurt small businesses. But just as many said it would have no impact on small businesses, while 26 percent thought it would help them.

The Rutgers-Eagleton poll found that support for upping the minimum wage decreased as respondents’ income increased. But even among the highest earners, who take in more than \$150,000 a year, support for the wage hike was still a strong 68 percent.

Senate and Assembly Democrats decided to put the minimum wage question on the ballot after Gov. Chris Christie nixed their attempt to raise it through legislation. After they sent him a bill that would raise it to \$8.25 and then yearly based on the Consumer Price Index, Christie conditionally vetoed the bill to remove the annual raises and phase in the increase to \$8.25 over the course of three years. Democrats did not need Christie's approval to put the question on the ballot.

The Monmouth poll was conducted from Sept. 6 to Sept. 10 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.8 percentage points.

The Rutgers-Eagleton poll was conducted from Sept. 3 to Sept. 9 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 4.1 percentage points.

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