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## **Dropping Minimum Wage Proposal from State Budget Hurts Women**

### ***State Leaders Miss Opportunity to Help Women and Families Statewide***

March 31, 2015 – New York, NY – In response to pressure from Senate Republicans, Governor Cuomo’s proposal to raise the minimum wage was dropped from the state budget during final negotiations. The budget, set to be approved on time, excludes increases that would have brought the minimum wage up to \$10.50 across the state and \$11.50 in New York City.

NOW New York President Sonia Ossorio said, “This is a big loss for women. Sixty percent of minimum wage workers across the state are women. In New York City, forty percent of single mothers are living below the poverty line. Raising the minimum wage would have an immediately positive and far-reaching impact on women’s economic status.”

Ossorio added, “Wal-Mart – a corporation with a dismal record on workplace fairness for women – is set to raise its minimum wage to \$10 by February of next year. So, New York will soon have a record worse than Wal-Mart in our treatment of lower income workers.”

The final budget package also left out key proposals to strengthen campus sexual assault policies and pass the Dream Act, which would enable children of undocumented immigrants access to financial aid for college. However, Rape Crisis Programs that were facing huge statewide cuts will see an increase in funding. NOW New York and sexual assault service providers advocated for stronger support.

“A true commitment to addressing sexual assault – on and off campus – means investing real dollars in services and prevention efforts,” said Sonia Ossorio, president of NOW New York. “Instead of slashing funding for rape crisis programs across the state, this is a place where the Governor and lawmakers did the right thing by deciding to increase funding and show that New York is serious about addressing sexual assault and its prevention.”

More than \$6 million has been allocated to Rape Crisis Programs across the state, including sexual assault prevention efforts. An additional \$3 million has been allocated to support the mandate of the Safe Harbor Act, which designates minors arrested for prostitution-related offenses as “persons in need of services,” rather than criminals who deserve jail time. The need for services is critical among this vulnerable population.

*The National Organization for Women is the nation’s largest organization working to advance women’s rights and improve women’s lives. NOW New York aims to protect and promote reproductive justice, secure workplace equality, combat racism and homophobia, and end discrimination and violence against all women.*

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