

## **NJ will have to pump its own gas if minimum wage is raised to \$15, Guadagno says**

*Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno, said Wednesday she does not support paid sick leave mandates and minimum wage hike to \$15 an hour. She is expected to run for governor in 2017.*

By Susan K. Livio | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com  
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Raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour in New Jersey -- a proposal Democrats running for governor next year support -- will likely lead to drivers having to pump their own gas, Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno said Wednesday.

Guadagno, a Republican who is also eyeing her own run for governor, told the New Jersey Gasoline Convenience-Automotive Association: "If we pass the \$15 minimum wage, you're pumping your own gas," according to a report at northjersey.com.

"You go to \$15 minimum wage, you're not going to be able to hire that high school kid, or that senior citizen, or that person who is here trying to move here from out of the country," Guadagno said. "Minimum wage was never intended, in my mind, to provide a living wage," she added. "It won't, not in New Jersey. So let's make minimum wage what it's supposed to be, and that is a stepping stone up." New Jersey's minimum wage is currently \$8.38 an hour, going up to \$8.44 on January 1, 2017.

New Jersey and Oregon are the only two states that have self-service bans, though Oregon this year began allowing drivers to pump their own gas at night in rural counties.

New Jersey's ban would have to be repealed by law. Several attempts to do so have failed, however, and talk about a repeal has not gained traction even with a 23-cent gas tax increase per gallon that took effect Nov. 1.

Guadagno's role as New Jersey first lieutenant governor has been "to improve New Jersey's economic vitality, encourage job growth, streamline government, and make businesses feel welcome again in New Jersey," according to her webpage.

Guadagno's remarks aligned with those of her boss, Gov. Chris Christie, who vetoed a \$15-an-hour minimum wage hike in August.

She made headlines in October when she spoke out against a Nov. 8 ballot question Christie supported that called for dedicating all petroleum gas tax revenues to funding transportation projects. It was a move seen an attempt to distance herself from the governor, whose poll numbers are slipping, and to carve out her own identity and positions as the 2017 gubernatorial race gets underway. Voters approved the referendum.

Guadagno also spoke out at the gathering of about 100 gas station and convenience store owners that she does not agree with mandating sick leave pay. A bill is pending that would allow employees to accrue one hour of paid sick time for every 30 hours worked.

"Should the government dictate to you what you provide to your employees?" she said. "I personally don't think so."

Democratic candidate for Governor, Phil Murphy, has endorsed the \$15 minimum wage hike. Assemblyman John Wisniewski (D-Middlesex), another gubernatorial candidate, was a prime sponsor of the bill Christie vetoed.

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