

New Jersey Minimum Wage to Increase in 2017

By Richard J. Cino and Justin B. Cutlip

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New Jersey's minimum wage will increase from \$8.38 per hour to \$8.44 per hour effective January 1, 2017, the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJLW) has announced.

New Jersey voters approved a referendum in November 2013 modifying the New Jersey Constitution and requiring the NJLW annually to review the minimum wage and announce any increase for the following calendar year by September 30th. The 2017 minimum wage rate hike is based on the 0.66% increase during the one-year period from August 2015 through August 2016 of the consumer price index (CPI) for all urban wage earners and clerical workers (CPI-W, U.S. City Average), as reported by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Since the voter referendum passed in 2013, the New Jersey hourly minimum wage has increased a total of \$1.19. In January 2014, the minimum wage increased \$1.00 per hour, from \$7.25 to \$8.25. In January 2015, the minimum wage increased \$0.13 per hour, from \$8.25 to \$8.38. In 2016, the minimum wage remained at \$8.38 per hour based on the CPI-W. As of January 1, 2017, the minimum wage will increase \$0.06 per hour, from \$8.38 to \$8.44.

Despite the 2013 voter referendum on minimum wage, and the subsequently increases, the New Jersey Legislature has continued its effort to further increase the minimum wage. This summer, both the Senate and Assembly passed a bill that would have increased the minimum wage to more than \$15.00 per hour by 2021. Although Governor Chris Christie vetoed the bill on August 30, 2016, proponents are seeking to place the measure on the ballot for voter approval in the fall of 2017.

For now, New Jersey employers must ensure all employees are paid at least the minimum wage of \$8.44 per hour as of January 1, 2017. Employers also should continue to track efforts to increase the minimum wage to more than \$15.00 per hour.

Please contact Jackson Lewis for assistance or questions regarding minimum wage or other workplace issues.

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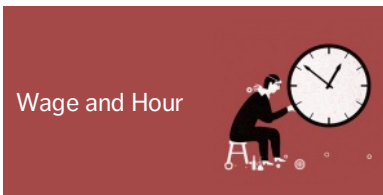
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