



To the Editor:

The Direct Support Staff of St. Lawrence NYSARC respectfully request that Governor Cuomo provide a wage increase equivalent to the fast food worker wage increase to people like us who provide direct supports to individuals with disabilities.

We appreciate your efforts to raise the minimum wage here in NYS to \$15. People who work full time – including those in the fast food industry – deserve to make a living wage. As a professional in this field – who is responsible for supporting the lives of New Yorkers with disabilities – I deserve an equivalent increase as well. Our jobs require extensive training on skills necessary to protect the safety and well - being of the people under our care – people who are often dependent on us for all aspects of daily living. We support people who cannot take care of themselves! Everything we do is subject to the strictest State scrutiny and any misstep by us can have serious consequences. Yet our wages are extremely low! Many of us work more than one job, just to make ends meet.

The State's plan to raise the minimum wage for fast food workers, without providing equivalent wage increases for people who provide direct supports to individuals is not fair! This will only make the shortage of people willing to provide direct supports to individuals with disabilities worse – not because we don't want to BUT we can't afford to! Governor Cuomo please do the right thing and give us a wage increase.

Kelley J. Rheume

