Small Speech for Govenor Cuomo - Spring 2016

Hello. [Thanks to union leaders and others in audience] Like New York, unions are built to lead. And leading means taking action to help working families survive. Leading means facing reality: $9/hour isn't enough for working families to pay for basic necessities.

In New York State, last year, the average annual wage of a fast-food worker making minimum wage was under $16,000, that's below the 2015 federal poverty guideline for a two person household. Poverty. That's crazy. A single parent working full time can't put food on the table.

Fast-food workers here in Buffalo have told their stories: rationing food until payday, sharing rooms and beds to save on rent, relying on public assistance to survive. Forget about getting ahead. Wendy's workers like Somalia Doyle, a mother and college student, has to save three paychecks to pay for one college textbook. Meanwhile, the CEO of Wendy's made over 7 million dollars last year and management says they can't afford to pay workers more. Does that sound right to you?

A minimum wage hike to $15/hour will enable those workers to support themselves, while boosting the economy. 2.3 million lower-income New Yorkers will finally earn a fair wage, making an $15.7 billion dollars to spend across New York State. This added expenditure creates more jobs. That sounds like a raise for all of us.

We're making progress, but the fight isn't over. Thank you for speaking up for all New Yorkers as we fight for fifteen. Call your elected officials, tell your friends and family to do the same. Tell people in line at the grocery store. You won't have to convince the cashier. She lives it everyday. This is about all of us. We stand together.