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COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
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MEMORANDUM

TO: All House Members

FROM: Rep. Mark B. Cohen 

DATE: July 26, 2012

RE: Co-sponsorship of Minimum Wage Legislation

According to the HHS Poverty Guidelines for 2012, a family of three is considered at the poverty line when earning an income of \$19,090. The current minimum wage of \$7.15 allows that same family to earn only \$14,872—less than the HHS Poverty Guideline for a family of two.

Eight states, (California, Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, Nevada, Oregon, Vermont and Washington) plus the District of Columbia, currently have a minimum wage equal to or above \$8.00. Many of the states have also adopted a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) or an adjustment using the Consumer Price Index for urban populations. Eighteen states have passed minimum wage rates above the federal minimum.

Legislators in our neighboring states of New York and New Jersey are advancing bills (passed in at least one chamber) that will raise their minimum wages from \$7.25 to \$8.50 per hour and provide a COLA in future years. Accordingly, I am introducing legislation to raise Pennsylvania's minimum wage to \$8.50 in 2012. In January 2014, and thereafter the bill provides for an adjustment calculated using the regional CPI-U for PA, NJ, DE and MD.

Any member wishing to cosponsor this legislation should contact Linda Huntington in my office at lhunting@pahouse.net or (717) 787-3085.