

# RWDSU POLITICAL & LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

## New Jersey Minimum Wage Increases to \$15

In February, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy signed into law a new \$15 per hour minimum wage bill. Minimum wage workers in the Garden State will see their wages begin to increase in July, with most earning the full \$15 per hour by 2024. The July increases alone will mean an extra \$1,200 in the pockets of over a million minimum wage workers in 2019.

RWDSU Local 108 has long been involved in the fight for \$15 in New Jersey, working alongside other unions, community groups, and allies in government to help raise wages for minimum wage workers. The coalition continues to push for anti-wage theft legislation to protect the rising pay for New Jersey workers. ■



RWDSU Local 108 members were on hand for the signing of New Jersey's minimum wage increase law.

## RWDSU Stands Up to Cashless Commerce

The RWDSU is taking a stand against the proliferation of cashless business, where establishments accept only credit or debit cards instead of old-fashioned greenbacks – paper money. More and more businesses are moving towards a cashless business model, claiming they are doing it for consumer convenience. But the truth is the practice discriminates against seniors, low-income people and minorities.

"To have a credit card, a person must have a bank account. This means that people without a bank and a credit card cannot shop at these businesses, effectively excluding people from participating in the local economy. In fact, this could affect large portions of the population," said RWDSU Political Director Camille Rivera.

The numbers back up the claims that cashless business discriminates. Communities of color, seniors, low-income people, the disabled, and other marginalized households go unbanked at rates far higher than the national average. Close to 17 percent of African American

households and 14 percent of Latino households are unbanked, compared to an average of 6.5 percent nationally. In addition, about one in five households has no credit, making it difficult or impossible to obtain a credit card.



### Fighting Cashless Legislatively

Legislative action is one way to protect consumers from discriminatory cashless business practices. Philadelphia in March banned all cashless business at stores and restaurants. Massachusetts has required businesses to accept cash since 1978, and the New Jersey state legislature has advanced a ban on cashless food and retail business to go before the Senate. The Washington D.C. City Council drafted a bill to ban cash-free restaurants this summer.

In New York, the RWDSU has gotten behind Initiative 1281-2018 *Prohibiting Retail Establishments from Refusing to Accept Payment in Cash* and sent the New York City Council a memo of support. Protecting consumers and opposing discrimination helps all working people, and the RWDSU will continue to do so on this important issue. ■

## Local 1102 Members at NYC Airports To See Pay Increases



RWDSU members rally for the new wage resolution for airline workers last year.

In September, with the RWDSU and other unions leading the fight for better pay, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey enacted a new wage resolution. In addition to increasing wages, the new policy includes the nearly 5,000 airline catering workers who were excluded from the Port Authority's previous wage policy.

The long-delayed vote, which was strongly opposed by the airline industry, will steadily increase airline catering and airport concessions workers' base wages, many of whom were receiving the respective states' minimum wages, to \$19 per hour by 2023. The RWDSU represents thousands of workers at LaGuardia, JFK and Newark airports, but implementation of the proposal could impact tens of thousands of workers at area airports in the largest sector-based minimum wage increase in the country. Workers at Port Authority airports started seeing these pay increases in November of last year. ■