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Nassau Comptroller Jack Schnirman Releases Annual Living Wage Report

MINEOLA, NY – Nassau County Comptroller Jack Schnirman today released the County’s annual Living Wage Law Annual Report, which highlights the work done by his office and the Living Wage Advisory Board to ensure County contractors are paying their employees their fair share. The report highlighted more than \$220,000 in wages and uncompensated time off identified in 2018 and outlined the new rules contractors must follow that were signed by the Comptroller and County Executive in July.

“In less than two years, we have identified more than \$265,000 in unpaid wages and time off for 185 workers, reduced the number of living wage waivers being granted, launched a bi-lingual living wage hotline that connects our investigators directly with workers, and closed loopholes that allowed companies to skirt the living wage law,” Nassau County Comptroller Jack Schnirman said.

The Comptroller’s Office continues to perform audits, respond to employee complaints and inquiries, and monitor providers that were reviewed previously to ensure that they remain in compliance with the Law. Earlier this year, the Comptroller’s Office and County Executive signed new Living Wage rules that allow the County to review the parent and subsidiary of a vendor that has a contract with the County when determining waiver eligibility requirements to ensure no contractor can skirt paying the Living Wage. The Comptroller’s Office also follows-up with selected new providers who have received contracts with the County to ensure that they comply with their contract regarding the Living Wage.

The Nassau County Living Wage Law was originally enacted in 2007 to raise the minimum wage of employees of most vendors with County service contracts. It ensures that employees of certain companies that Nassau County does business with are earning the Living Wage.

“The work of the Nassau County Living Wage Advisory Board is vitally important to the men and women who are employed by Nassau County’s vendors. The work of the Comptroller’s Office to ensure that they are more accessible to workers is commendable, and this year’s report shows that these efforts are working as over \$265,000 has been identified for workers who were not receiving the appropriate wages and benefits,” said John R. Durso, Chair of the Nassau County Living Wage Advisory Board and President of the Long Island Federation of Labor AFL-CIO and Local 338 RWDSU/UFCW. “I am looking forward to the continued partnership between all of the members

of the Nassau County Living Wage Advisory Board and the Comptroller's Office to continue to protect Nassau's workers and residents.”

Since 2007, the Comptroller's Office, working with the County's Living Wage Advisory Board, has released 43 Living Wage audit reports encompassing 34 different contractors, identifying a total of more than \$1.36 million in underpaid wages and uncompensated time off affecting 1,709 employees. Since taking office, Schnirman has revitalized the Committee, ensuring it holds regular quarterly meetings and has the information needed to review contractor compliance with the law.

Schnirman also announced the new living wage rates in Nassau County. As of August 1, 2019, the living wage increased to \$16.76 per hour for employees without health benefits, raising it 35 cents compared to last year's wage of \$16.41. For employees with health benefits, the amount increased to \$14.51 from \$14.27. The increases are adjusted annually based on the New York metropolitan-area CPI-U Index and will remain in effect until July 31, 2020.