

# Court Upholds Santa Fe Living Wage Law

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## **Court Upholds Santa Fe Wage Ordinance**

*Landmark Ruling Confirms Power of Cities to Raise Pay for Low-Wage Residents*

**Santa Fe, New Mexico** - In a sweeping decision, New Mexico state court Judge Daniel Sanchez today upheld the Santa Fe minimum wage ordinance — one of the nation's first local laws raising the minimum wage for workers at all large private businesses in the city. The ruling means that thousands of low-wage workers across the city will begin receiving at least \$8.50 an hour.

“We’re enormously gratified by the decision, which will benefit the low-wage workers of Santa Fe,” said Sidney Rosdeitcher of Paul Weiss Rifkind Wharton & Garrison. The Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law and the Paul Weiss law firm joined with the Santa Fe City Attorney in defending the ordinance.

“Today’s ruling confirms that cities have broad powers to protect low-wage workers in their communities,” said Brennan Center associate counsel Paul Sonn. “I think we’ll see more cities following Santa Fe’s

lead.”

Since 1994, more than 110 cities have enacted living wage laws that increase the minimum wage for workers at businesses performing city contracts. Now, in an important new trend, cities like Santa Fe are enacting broader minimum wage laws that raise pay for workers at all private businesses in their communities — not just those performing city contracts. San Francisco, Madison and Washington, D.C. have enacted similar city minimum wage laws in recent years.

“Our city council recognized that the \$5.15 federal minimum wage just isn’t enough for working families in Santa Fe,” said Maria Cornejo, a local resident who has worked as a cleaner at Santa Fe hotels. Added Carol Oppenheimer of the Santa Fe Living Wage Network, which led the campaign for the ordinance, “With a living wage, the hard-working people of Santa Fe will be better able to support themselves and their families.”

The Brennan Center for Justice, a public policy center at NYU School of Law, advises cities and states across the United States on minimum wage and living wage legislation.

For more information, please contact Paul Sonn at (212) 998-6328. For additional information on minimum wage and living wage legislation, please visit the Center’s living wage page at [http://www.brennancenter.org/programs/living\\_wage/index.html](http://www.brennancenter.org/programs/living_wage/index.html). A copy of the court’s ruling is available on the Santa Fe Living Wage Network’s website at <http://www.santafelivingwage.org/lawsuit.html>

*The Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law, founded in 1995, unites thinkers and advocates in pursuit of a vision of inclusive and effective democracy. Its mission is to develop and implement an innovative, nonpartisan agenda of scholarship, public education, and legal action that promotes equality and human dignity, while*

*safeguarding fundamental freedoms.*