

WASHINTON, D.C. – Congressional Democrats, including all four Democrats in the New Mexico delegation, are pushing for a $12 minimum wage.

With both the House and Senate controlled by Republicans, it is very unlikely that a minimum wage increase would pass during the current Congress. However, the push could be an attempt to bring the wedge issue up in time for the 2016 elections.

In addition to increasing the minimum wage to $12 by 2020, the legislation would index the minimum wage to inflation.

Senators Udall and Heinrich are among the co-sponsors of the Senate version of the legislation, introduced by Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash. The two made the announcement in a press release earlier this week.

Udall said in a statement that the legislation would help a quarter of a million New Mexicans get more money.

“The minimum wage was supposed to be a floor to ensure Americans receive fair wages for hard work,” Udall said in a statement. “But today, thousands of New Mexicans are struggling to support their families on the minimum wage. The wage has not kept up with inflation, and it’s holding back New Mexico families and our economy.”

Heinrich said that it would make sure families “have more money in their pockets to contribute to the local economy.”

“No one who works hard in a full-time job should have to live in poverty. Yet far too many New Mexicans are struggling to make ends meet,” Heinrich said. “Raising the minimum wage is critical to working families and will contribute to improving our state’s economy.”

A companion piece of legislation was introduced in the House by Rep. Bobby Scott, D-Va., also has the support of two New Mexicans in Washington D.C.

Both Rep. Ben Ray Luján and Michelle Lujan Grisham are among the cosponsors of the legislation.

“New Mexico’s workers want to receive a fair day’s pay for a fair day’s work. They want to work hard so they can send their children to college and save for a dignified retirement,” Luján said in a statement. “Yet at today’s minimum wage, many full-time workers and their families have to work two or three jobs just to get by. Raising the minimum wage will reward hard work, grow opportunities, and strengthen our economy.”

Luján has more attention on him than before, as he heads the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

Rep. Steve Pearce is the lone Republican in the congressional delegation and has voted against minimum wage increases in the past.