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could lead to cannibalistic competition among New York communities that would hold back economic growth.

Feb. 13, 2014

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo said Tuesday that local control of minimum wage could lead to cannibalistic competition among New York communities that would hold back economic growth.

“That competition within the state ... I do not believe would be productive,” Cuomo said in a radio interview on WCNV's “The Capitol Pressroom.” “And I don't want to see Buffalo trying to steal from Syracuse trying to steal from Albany.”

Cuomo's comments came a day after New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio called on Albany to grant the city the power to set its own minimum wage, and as progressive advocates rallied at the Capitol on Tuesday to launch the push to allow cities, towns and counties throughout New York to set their own baseline wage.

Asked about de Blasio's request, Cuomo said he was “in favor of something called the constitution of the state of New York, which suggests that we have localities and what the localities deem important for the localities is taken seriously.”

” ... But we are also one state,” he continued, “and we don't want to cannibalize ourselves.”

Advocates contend that the legislation, trumpeted by Senate Democrats last week, would allow communities to pay workers a fair wage based on local economic conditions and costs of living — similar to what's already done in parts of California, Maryland and elsewhere.

While supporters including major New York City labor unions and the progressive

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Peter.

Martin Reid, chairman of the Rensselaer County Legislature and a Sand Lake Republican, said “allowing each municipality or county to set the standards creates a potential for chaos, both for employers and employees.”

“I think a uniform standard, set by the state after consideration by the state Legislature, works best for upstate,” Reid said in a statement.

Responding to Cuomo's remarks, Tsedeye Gebreselassie, a staff attorney at the National Employment Law Project, said “giving cities the power to raise wages has been anything but chaotic. It's been profitable for businesses and workers alike.”

Hector Figueroa, president of the union 32BJ, said the grass-roots campaign to recruit local support has just begun.

“We're going to engage certainly all of our local leaders,” Figueroa said, “and we expect them to be able to be supportive of this measure.”

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