



FAMILY FORWARD
OREGON

Smart policies for today's families.

February 11, 2014

Testimony on SB 1547- Youth Employment Act
Submitted by Kate Newhall, Family Forward Oregon

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 1547. Family Forward Oregon supports creating valuable work experiences and training opportunities for young workers, but we have concerns about any practice that compensates an employee - of any age – at less than the minimum wage. We support Oregon’s minimum wage law, which is intended to serve as a training wage in many cases, and worry about the ripple effect of allowing an employer to pay young workers \$2 less than minimum wage. We also do not believe state subsidizes should be used to supplement this practice.

Family Forward Oregon is an organization committed to advancing policies that support families and help them succeed, both in the workplace and at home. Our mission is to create a family-friendly Oregon where *all* families can be economically secure and have the time it takes to care for a family. Today, too many families are forced to sacrifice one or the other. Family Forward supports policies, like affordable childcare, retirement security, pay equality, and living wages that make economic stability and work-family balance more achievable.

While we commend the intent of this legislation and efforts to find ways to provide valuable work experiences to young workers in Oregon, we do not feel like subsidizing sub-minimum wage compensation is the best investment of our limited resources. Instead, we should be investing in workforce development and skills training so that we can develop a trained workforce and attract more employers who provide family wage jobs and drive economic growth in Oregon.