



Oregon

Bureau of Labor and Industries

Brad Avakian
Commissioner

Chair Paul Holvey and Committee Members
House Committee on Business and Labor

April 1, 2015

Re: House Bill 3471

Dear Chair Holvey and Committee Members,

At the Bureau of Labor and Industries it is our job to see that workers get paid every dime they earn. Often, that is a very small amount. Sometimes it is simply not enough to help those workers stay above water.

I write today to express my support for House Bill 3471, which addresses the looming crisis created by low wages.

More and more workers find themselves struggling to make ends meet. Some employers pay so little that workers, even those working full-time, must rely on public assistance. Over 400,000 Oregonians are employed in low-wage work. An estimated 33% of single working mothers in Oregon live below the poverty line.

Low wages affect all of us. Poverty wages lead to greater dependency on taxpayer funded programs. Families must rely on those programs to meet the costs of basic necessities. When workers are paid a fairer wage they can support their families, spend money in local businesses and stand on their own two feet without relying on state support. Workers with more money in their pockets help our overall economy to thrive.

Working families are struggling and taxpayers are paying the costs for low wages. Large corporations should not be able pay low wages and expect Oregonians to pick up the tab.

I urge your support of HB 3471.

Respectfully submitted,

Brad Avakian
Commissioner
Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries

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