



“Helping Business Succeed”

April 13, 2015

To: Chair Holvey and members of the House Business and Labor Committee
Chair Dembrow and members of the Senate Committee on Workforce

On behalf of our Board of Directors, The Chamber of Medford/Jackson County is writing in opposition to the minimum wage increase bills in question at this evening’s hearing, specifically SB 327, 597, 610, 682, and HB 2008, 2009 and 2012.

As the largest Chamber of Commerce in the state, we join with other Chambers and business organizations around the State of Oregon in sharing deep concerns with both A) laws that create unnecessary hardships for business and unintended consequences for the public, and B) a palpable policy shift among lawmakers that is quickly labeling Oregon as a difficult place to start, run and grow business.

With regard to the minimum wage bills being discussed, we are opposed in very strong terms to artificial wage increases that result from state or local municipality interference. As with other Chambers of Commerce, we support the wage growth and economic opportunity provided by a strong economy, robust sales and good margins. Clearly we have the same goal in mind - improving the lives of our workforce. However, we differ on the fundamental processes that will achieve that goal with a minimum of disruption. The right way to do this is to allow the economic engine to power recovery and wage growth, as it always has.

These artificial wage hikes will unfortunately damage the very engine in Oregon that this body would rely on to fulfill its mission. It should be clear that we can't have it both ways.

Please join us in opposing these damaging artificial wage hikes. Instead, we should focus on creating good policy that makes it easier for businesses to grow, not harder, and policy that incentivizes and attracts new businesses, family wage jobs, and greater investment in Oregon. Please don’t create policy that repels it. We strongly urge your no vote on these job killing bills.

Sincerely,

Brad S. Hicks, CCE
President & CEO