

Dear Senator Sara Gelsler:

I would like to submit this letter as written testimony against Senate Bill(s) 130, 327, 332, 597, 610, and 682. My opposition comes in two parts. The first part is not every district in Oregon is the same just like not every city is the same. It appears that a couple of these bills would not allow certain areas to set their own wages. Circumstances in Portland and Eugene vary greatly from circumstances in Bandon or Port Orford. You can't do a one size fits all approach, it just doesn't work.

Second, my wife and I own a bakery in the small tourist town of Bandon. We have had this bakery for 17 years now. In that time we have been the "first real job experience" for about 75 high school age kids. They lived at home with their parents and most of them spent the money they earned on cars or saved it for college. It is truly amazing when you drive by the high school these days and look at the parking lot and realize these kids are driving vehicles younger than mine.

They came to us with very little skills, but a desire to do a good job. We have invested many hours in training these young people to be productive. They have to be taught how to sweep, wash dishes, customer service, proper food handling guidelines, how to use a register, count change back, if the minimum wage rises any higher, we will not be able to employee kids trying to get their first job. They will miss out on the valuable experience we offer, how to work hard. How does that benefit Oregon's future? I have kept in contact with some of the kids that we have had work for us and they all offer their thanks to us (and their parents) for teaching them a good work ethic.

The other employees we have will also be affected by these bills. We operate on a slim profit margin. Not only will my labor costs increase, but all the products I buy will increase. I will then be forced to raise my prices and cut back on their hours. I have talked with numerous other business owners who state the same thing. I know this is going to be a mistake.

Seattle has just increased their minimum wage. Why not wait a year or two and see how that works. If that doesn't make sense, then try it in Portland for a year. See how that city handles it before you impose a death sentence on small rural areas that are struggling to stay afloat now.

Respectfully,  
Chris Powell  
Bandon Baking Company