

April 13, 2015

To: Senate Workforce and House Business and Labor Committees

From: Karen Nettler, Oregon Center for Christian Voices

Re: In Support of an Increase in the Minimum Wage

Dear Chairs Dembrow and Holvey and Committee Members:

My name is Karen Nettler, I am a resident of Portland, and I am here today on behalf of Oregon Center for Christian Voices (OCCV), a faith-based non-profit seeking to activate Christians on issues of economic and social justice.

OCCV believes Scripture clearly states that God's intended role for government is to assure our economic and social policies provide opportunity for all to flourish, that God takes particular interest in the most needy and marginalized, and looks to those who govern to share that interest when deciding policies.

OCCV supports increasing the minimum wage. Throughout the Hebrew scriptures the prophets speak to the need for a fair economic system, one which does not tolerate conditions that create poverty. Scripture does not condemn financial prosperity, but it clearly condemns gross disparities in opportunity and outcome that cause suffering and perpetuate poverty, and calls us to work toward equality of opportunity, so that people who work have enough to meet their economic needs and to be dignified members of their community. We believe it is simply wrong that there are those in our community who work full-time and yet cannot escape poverty.

An increase in the minimum wage is a means of lifting people out of poverty, and also acknowledges the worth and dignity of those doing the work. While profits are essential in our economic systems, we believe it is a moral imperative to attend to the well-being of workers and their families by assuring they have a reasonable measure of economic security in return for their labor.

Scripture tells us that the success or failure of our government policies can be judged by how well the most needy and marginalized are doing. Therefore, we respectfully urge you to support increasing the minimum wage, and thereby taking an important step toward addressing the economic insecurity experienced by many of the hard-working people in our community.

Sincerely,

Karen Nettler