

April 13, 2015

To: Senate Workforce and House Business and Labor Committees
From: Howard N. Kenyon, Director of Community Ministries, Ecumenical Ministries
of Oregon
Re: Support of Increased Minimum Wage

Dear Chairs Dembrow and Holvey and Committee Members,

My name is Howard Kenyon and I direct Ecumenical Ministry of Oregon's Northeast Emergency Food Program in Portland. Over the past fourteen years, we have served emergency food and clothing to more than 55,000 unique individuals. **Half of those we serve who are adults aged 21-65 do have employment, but with inadequate income to provide for their families.**

I'd like to share the story of one family, a couple I met nearly five years ago when Keith was laid off from his job in a salvage yard. When their third child was born two years ago, they discovered that Vickie, the mother and wife, has MS.

After four years of desperately looking for work, Keith finally landed a job a year ago at a Subway shop. Actually he found work at two shops, putting in 60+ hours week after week. Within two months he was promoted to manager at one of the stores – in Big Pink downtown, one of the busiest sandwich shops in Portland. His other store is in Clackamas.

Even with promotions and increases in pay over the past year, he still does not make enough to provide for his family. He works a combination of salary and hourly wages, but either way you calculate it **he makes only \$12 per hour.**

How do Keith & Vickie make ends meet? Sad to say, in no small part due to a team of volunteers we have laced together. And with a lot of basic ends *not* met.

Keith is a hard worker. **He longs to provide adequately for his family – and independently of our help. But he can't work any harder than he is doing. He needs – and deserves – a higher wage.**

Sincerely,

Howard N. Kenyon
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