



**Chair Holvey, Vice-chairs, and members of the Committee:**

I'm Steve Bintliff, a resident of Tigard, and a member of the citizen group, Tigard First. Anyone with a job should be paid enough to be able to afford food, a place to live, and care for their kids. This is a fundamental value that our group believes in, and I'm sure all of you do too.

When a person has a job, but it still pays so little that he/she has to be on public assistance, it's the rest of the state's taxpayers that end up paying the bill. Study after study has shown that in Oregon, the wage that allows people to be self-sufficient is \$15/hour. In Tigard, 11 of our 25 largest employers, including Walmart, Target and Macy's, each made over a billion dollars in profits last year, yet many of their employees were in need of public assistance because they only pay the minimum wage.

This is one way in which taxpayers are subsidizing the profits of Big Business. And this is the case, not just in Tigard, but all over Oregon. In LaGrande, for example, taxpayers are subsidizing the low wages that Walmart pays its associates. It's the 11<sup>th</sup> largest employer in Union County and they pay the minimum wage. If they paid their workers a living wage instead, it would make a big difference to the local economy. In Roseburg, Walmart is the 8<sup>th</sup> largest employer. In Medford, it's the 9<sup>th</sup> largest employer. With over \$16B in profit last year, Walmart can afford to give their workers a raise. So can Target, Macy's, the Home Depot and others who do business in our state.

A \$15 an hour minimum wage in Oregon would relieve this burden on the state's taxpayers, and make large retail employers pay their fair share. More importantly, it would allow tens of thousands of households in the state to become self-reliant, paying for housing, food, gas and other necessities. This, in turn, has an 'amplifying effect' on communities, leading to increased sales for locally owned businesses and providing a big boost to local economies.

We think passage of HB2009 would provide a huge economic boost for communities all over the state, while relieving taxpayers from some of the burden of funding public assistance programs that currently support the working poor.

It's time to raise the state's minimum wage. It's time for '15 Now'!

Sincerely,

Stephen Bintliff  
Tigard First!

References:

City of Tigard  
15NowPDX.org,  
FightFor15.org  
Medford, Oregon Chamber of Commerce  
Umpqua Economic Development Partnership  
Union County Economic Development Corporation