



Testimony in Support of Raising Oregon's Minimum Wage

April 13, 2015

Senate Workforce Committee

House Business and Labor Committee

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Chair Dembrow and Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association in support of raising Oregon's minimum wage.

The Oregon Nurses Association is Oregon's oldest and largest nursing union and professional association, and is proud to represent more than 13,000 registered nurses, advanced practice nurses and nursing students in Oregon. Oregon nurses make up the largest segment of Oregon's health care workforce, and practice in nearly every health care setting, from large hospitals to small local clinics, from corrections to school-based health centers, and in community-based public health.

Raising the minimum wage is not just an economic issue. For hundreds of thousands of working Oregonians and their families, raising the minimum wage could also have profound health benefits.

Income affects the quality of health care individuals can afford and the rates at which they contract diseases like diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, and the likelihood they will suffer premature mortality.

Low wages have also been found to predict increases in the prevalence of obesity and hypertension, particularly for women and Oregonians younger than 40 years old. Both of these groups are also more likely than men over 40 to be employed in low-wage jobs.

Raising the minimum wage will help patients afford the health care and medications they need, reduce financial stress on families and contribute to greater personal and public health for Oregonians across the state.

ONA urges you to support raising Oregon's minimum wage to improve health.