



Stayton Sublimity
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Thrive Together!

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April 13, 2015

House Business & Labor Committee
Senate Workforce Committee

Re: Proposals to increase statewide minimum wage

Dear House Chair Holvey and Senate Chair Dembrow,

The Stayton/Sublimity Chamber of Commerce represents over 400 local businesses and we support Oregon's current minimum wage law that indexes the minimum wage each year based on inflation.

We ask that you oppose efforts to increase Oregon's minimum wage further. Increases in the minimum wage would hurt local businesses, result in fewer businesses and jobs, and would not benefit our community.

Oregon's minimum wage is the second highest state minimum wage in the US, behind only Washington (\$9.47/hour).

Oregon's historically high minimum wage has not yielded economic gains for Oregon workers. Oregon's unemployment rate has consistently exceeded the federal employment rate; our youth unemployment rate is also exceeding federal rates. Our poverty rate now exceeds the US poverty rate.

In Stayton the unemployment rates are even higher than state levels. We've heard from local students that they do not support an increase in minimum wage, as it is difficult to get a job. Without any on-the-job experience, our students do not feel confident in gaining employment after graduation.

Many of our local businesses, especially those related to food service, depend on these young students to fill their labor pool. The businesses train the students to be a contributing member of the workforce. If minimum wage increases, they will not have the luxury of a training period. They will hire applicants that already have experience. This will further the unemployment gap. Dr. Peter Cappelli of Wharton's Center for Human Resources describes this as a Catch-22 situation for workers – "to get a job, you have to have that job already."

As our local economy improves, do not place additional, unnecessary burdens, on our small businesses. They are the backbone of our community and the drivers for economic growth. We have received comments from many of our local businesses that an increase in minimum wage will adversely affect their business. As a community dependent on our small businesses, we urge you to oppose an increase in minimum wage.

Kelly Schreiber
Executive Director

Mission: To promote a thriving business climate that enhances local economic vitality & community livability.