

Senate Workforce and House Business and Labor Committees:

Hello my name is Adolfo Rodriguez. I live in Hermiston, Oregon. I work for the Hermiston School District as an ELL assistant in the Hermiston High School, and for the last 9 years I have been working here. I started as a special education assistant earning minimum wage. I don't have a complete degree, but do have the goal to achieve one in music toward which I have only a semester completed. I don't have kids, but do take care of my mother who at the moment is on dialysis treatment and hoping for a God's miracle and a transplant, which are really expensive.

I love my job at helping students be successful and obtain a high school diploma, so they can continue their education in college. I enjoy helping migrant students because I was once there, learning American culture and language. I'm glad there was assistance for me when I was in high school, because being an assistant is just like a teacher. You help kids in their academic needs and sometimes you're the only one they can trust and feel confident about any situation or struggle—personal or school related. It does have an effect on me when it comes to financial stability; being paid minimum wage and only getting about \$4.00 in raises over 9 years of service is hard. Cost of living is always going up and my wage only increases a few cents per year. I have put a lot of my heart into these kids, because I love what I do, but sometimes I wonder if I have to look somewhere else for better pay. I know that not a lot of people will do what I do for my wage while having the passion to do the work. I was the 2011 Employee of the Year (Crystal Apple Award) in my school and it was a great feeling to have received that, but I was happier to see my students walk during graduation with their diplomas in hand. Those

students thanking me felt awesome, because I knew I had helped them achieve one of their goals in life.

I strongly believe that having our wage increased to \$15 it will help us pay our way out of debts faster, help out our families, and spend more time with family instead of having two jobs. I believe that more bilingual people will want to work for school districts and help our kids achieve their goals. Money is not everything in life, but having a better financial stability will definitely help relieve that pressure and give us the opportunity to concentrate on our jobs even better. Every year new technology is put into our schools and why not spend some money in us—the teachers and assistants—where the knowledge comes from? I strongly support SB 610 and HB 2009, the bills that increase the minimum wage to \$15 over 3 years. Thank you! God bless!

Sincerely,

Adolfo Rodriguez
ELL assistant
Hermiston High School