

Chairs and members of the Senate Workforce and House Business and Labor Committees,

I began my career in an elementary school library 25 years ago. My pay is currently slightly above \$15.00 per hour. Four years ago our school district suffered budget shortfalls and reduced my job from 204 days a year to 180 days, a 12% cut in pay. The workload did not decrease unfortunately.

I took a job during the summer months cleaning computers. The pay was minimum wage with no benefits. I had to work the entire summer to make up for the lost wages from the 24 day cut I had endured. It opened my eyes as to what minimum wage means. The work I performed was similar to some of my usual duties and included not just cleaning, but updating software, troubleshooting equipment and of course specialized cleaning of school equipment. In a word, receiving that minimum wage was humiliating. The pay demoralized me and made me understand what so many skilled working adults have to endure in their daily lives.

Both of my children are University of Oregon graduates. They worked their way through college but still have college debt. One is getting paid \$13.00 an hour working for an internet based printing company. He does not receive medical insurance, so with this wage he is attempting to pay back college loans, pay rent in Portland and is buying insurance through the health exchange. As a skilled technical worker, he should be getting much more. He is getting more than minimum wage, but it is not an adequate wage for work performed.

My daughter recently got two job offers in Portland after working for five years as an outdoor educator in a national estuarine reserve in Charleston, Oregon. One job offered her \$13.00 per hour and the other \$15.00 per hour doing similar jobs in her field. She is very experienced at her job and knows that she will get by, but just barely on the \$15.00 per hour job. Rent and other costs in Portland will make it tough to pay for medical insurance, transportation and her housing.

I know from our family's experience with our recent struggles that the current minimum wage brings with it a demoralizing experience and an inability to contribute to the financial benefit for society. The current minimum wage enables employers to take advantage of hard working and skilled employees and is doing nothing for our economy except dragging it down.

One of my coworkers recently alerted me that many of her peers who work with developmentally disabled students are considering leaving their jobs as they know of private jobs available that come with benefits and a \$15.00 minimum wage doing similar work. Her wage is still under than amount even after many years of experience. Our public schools stand to lose valuable and dedicated workers due to low pay for the work they do.

Please consider supporting \$15.00 per hour for all workers. Not only will families benefit, but so would the economy.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Kulluson  
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