

April 13, 2015

To: Senate Workforce and House Business and Labor Committees  
From: Nick Gammon  
Re: Support of SB 610 and HB 2009

Dear Chairs Dembrow and Holvey and Committee Members,

My name is Nick Gammon and I live in Portland. I am the father of two young girls, one is two and a half and the other is just two months old.

I work as a cook in an upscale restaurant and earn just above the minimum wage. I am a skilled cook but on my wages it's difficult to support my family. After graduating from college most of the jobs I worked paid at or just above the minimum wage. I have been cooking for over ten years and have never made over 12 dollars per hour. My partner is currently on partially paid maternity leave and without that second income we are even more reliant on my low wages.

When my wife goes back to work in a few weeks, we will spend \$1,200 a month on childcare. And that's for our daughters to be in care only three days a week! My wages each month will only just cover our part-time childcare bill. There will be nothing left to spend on food and bills, let alone retirement savings or to buy a second car; which we will need in the near future, as I ride my bike carrying our 2 year-old in a trailer that will not accommodate our other baby.

I like my job and I love my family. I would even like more time with my children and less time at work, but can't afford to make that choice for my daughters. I never imagined that working in a skilled job would pay so little and there would be so few options in our state for people like me, with families, to make a living wage.

I want a bright future for my daughters- one that allows them to go to college, like I did. Except I want them to be able to afford that college and I want them to know that after they've worked so hard and gotten experience in their field, that they will earn a decent living. They deserve a financially secure future filled with possibility. In order to give them that future, I need to be able to earn enough to support my family and to save for them.

I hope you will stand up for all Oregon families by giving us a much-deserved raise.

Sincerely,

Nick Gammon