

I support HB 2009 and SB 610, to raise the minimum wage in Oregon to \$15.

I have owned a small business in Portland for 19 years. I will retire next year. I have always employed people for above the minimum wage.

Employees on a minimum wage have lives that are one long, economic emergency. I understand why business owners fear that raising the minimum wage could cause a difficult burden. But I also believe that if the business depends upon a decent wage for the business owner and an un-livable wage for others, that business is not viable, and needs a new strategy.

On the other hand, recent studies by Oregon Center for Public Policy have shown that when the wages go up, productivity does as well, and turnover is reduced. Turnover is a huge cost for both small and large businesses.

Until I personally had stable and well-paying employment, I raised my daughter through times when we could not even afford all of the basic necessities. I know firsthand the stress of having utilities shut off, the stress of applying for food assistance, the pain of not being able to take a child on a vacation or even a visit to relatives. All of these stresses cause illness and suffering that is not necessary.

Besides all of the personal and professional reasons for favoring a higher minimum wage, we need to also consider the benefits for the economy in general. When wages go up, not only do families get out of poverty and off public programs, the economy improves as well. Increased spending on local businesses benefits those local businesses. The heart beat of a business is always its customers—the number of them, and their ability to purchase your product or service.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Trudy Cooper
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