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April 13, 2015

House Business & Labor Committee  
Senate Workforce Committee  
Salem, Oregon

Re: Proposals to increase statewide minimum wage

Dear House Chair Holvey and Senate Chair Dembrow,

Has anyone wondered why so many people are still unemployed more than six years after the recent economic downturn started? The last time Oregon raised its minimum wage, I was a working reporter covering business. I interviewed a woman who owned a business sewing curtains on contract with a larger company. She told me she would have to lay off two of her five employees when the increase took effect.

Actually, it was worse than that. Her business failed. Where did those women go - the owner and the employees? I didn't follow them, but I can imagine that the jobs went to Mexico or China and the women got unemployment, and perhaps later, welfare checks. Or maybe they went underground, working and getting pay that was not reported.

These are consequences that are often ignored. I can't say the consequences are unintended or unexpected, because nearly everyone knows about them and expects them, but doesn't care. If it makes them feel good or sound caring, they are willing for other hidden, powerless people to suffer. This is the meaning of "well-intended" laws, and what "well-intentioned" lawmakers know.

It may sound like a good idea to people who have no understanding of how business works and how an economy operates, but it is magical thinking to imagine that changing one aspect of any system will not have an effect on the system as a whole and that the change would do only good.

**I urge you to table the proposal to increase Oregon's minimum wage.**

Sincerely,

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