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AFT-Oregon Testimony in Support of Minimum Wage Legislation: HB 2004, HB 2008, HB 2009, HB2012

The American Federation of Teachers-Oregon represents over 14,000 members across the state in private and public sectors in elementary schools, high schools, colleges, and universities.

Our members support legislation that would enable a raise in the minimum wage at the state and local levels. Too many Oregonians are struggling to make ends meet working full-time jobs at low wages. An Oregon worker earning minimum wage takes home just \$18,925 a year—not nearly enough to afford housing, food, gas and other necessities for a family, let alone afford child care or save for the future.

Public assistance often has to subsidize families in the low wage economy and decreases resources that could go to education and public infrastructure. Raising low incomes is beneficial to our economy.

Raising the minimum wage would help Oregon's education rates and the academic success from pre-school through college. We realize that the greatest barrier to quality education for all Oregonians is poverty. Low incomes affect families from early childhood through adult lives. Working people struggling to get by encounter steep barriers to continuing and succeeding in school and college. Nutrition is essential to foster mental and physical development in young children. Reports from the U.S. Department of Agriculture show that 15% of Oregon families are food insecure. A stable family life and a place to live are important factors in a child's

success in school. Pressures on young adults to immediately go to full-time work in order to help pay their families' rent and food costs contribute to higher drop-out rates.

Raising Oregon's minimum wage will give over half a million hardworking Oregonians a fair shot at a better life. It will make a difference in the lives of minimum wage Oregonians and offer them an opportunity to succeed in education and their future.