

April 13, 2015

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

Dear Chairs Dembrow and Holvey and Committee Members,

My name is Lise Brown. I am a native Oregonian and I live in Portland. I am married and I have one daughter. I have worked for a large employer in their billing department for four years now. My employer does not offer cost-of-living adjustments in our pay. As a result, my pay has only increased 49 cents in 4 years. My starting wage in this department was \$12.60/hour. I now make \$13.09/hour. Back in the 1990's, most large employers did offer COLA's, but not any more.

When my parents were married in the 1960's, they could live a wonderful middle class life with four children and just one parent working. This is not possible for most parents today, even parents with just one child. If I didn't have my husband to help out with his wage, I don't know what I'd do. I don't know how single moms manage these days. Even with my husband's wage, we need to put some expenses on credit cards each month and go into debt.

As a mom, I need to have a flexible work schedule. The only way I could get that was to take an "on-call" position with no medical benefits, no paid time off and no paid sick days. Our household makes a little too much money for me to qualify for the Oregon Health Plan, so I pay \$300/month for myself alone for Moda health insurance that has a \$4200 deductible!

The going rate in Portland for teens babysitting is at least \$10-15/hour. For older teens and college students it's \$15-25/hour on Care.com! Many babysitters are making more than minimum wage now mainly because parents who can afford to pay babysitters don't even know what the minimum wage is. I've asked some of them! When I tell them that our min. wage is below \$10/hour, they can't believe it's so low!! There are babysitters making more per hour than I make at one of the largest employers in the state!!

Wages have been stagnant in this country for over 30 years. Workers have become more productive, yet their wages have not increased with their productivity. Instead, large corporations have been giving the profits to their upper management and spending it on other excesses. The City of Portland will now pay their workers a \$15 minimum wage. I believe all large employers can afford to pay this wage today. A 3-year phase-in for smaller employers with lower profits could be written into the law to help small businesses transition. Large employers are certainly noticing the \$15 Now movement and are probably already planning for this change. Actually, they should have been paying this minimum wage 10 or 15 years ago, but the law never required them to do it, so they didn't do it.

Please do the right and moral thing for parents and families in Oregon. Raise the minimum wage to \$15 NOW! It will help families and help the economy. It's a win/win!