

Dear Elected Official:

As small business owners in Southern Oregon, we are opposed to the proposed bills you are considering for raising Oregon's minimum wage. Oregon currently has the second highest minimum wage in the nation. By raising it further, you will negatively impact our business as well as many other small Oregon businesses. And, in the long run, you will actually hurt those you believe a raise in wages will help. A raise in the minimum wage will result in cutting the growth and opportunities of new job creation and could result in reduced hours or, worse yet, eliminate the jobs of the currently employed.

Here is how the raise in the minimum wage would affect our small business...

We offer apprentice positions to new employees and although we offer a starting wage above the current minimum wage, we cannot afford to pay the proposed minimum wages to someone who has no skills and no knowledge to do the type of work we do. (Often times, in fact, entry level employees even lack basic math and language skills, which is another issue.) Training a new employee usually takes almost a year before they become knowledgeable and proficient in our unique refinishing process. ***Training new employees actually costs our business money, so adding to the minimum wage would increase the financial burden of hiring and training new employees.*** This is something our business cannot afford. Therefore, we would not be able to hire new employees (create more jobs) and grow our business. ***Having a lower minimum wage offers opportunities for employees to enter the job market, grow and learn new skills. Raising the minimum wage would limit or eliminate these opportunities.***

Like most businesses, payroll is our single largest expense. The increase in wages would also result in increased payroll taxes, workers' compensation insurance and general liability insurance as these are all based on payroll. Raising the minimum wage would increase the costs of goods and services to everyone. In order to offset these costs, we would be forced to raise our prices and this would most likely reduce the number of customers willing to purchase our service. Again, ***this would result in cutting hours or laying off existing employees*** if we do not have the work to offer them.

Another option to offset increased labor costs would be cutting employee benefits. Unlike government, businesses must operate at a profit in order to survive and grow. If our business is not able to operate at a profit, ***we may simply have to close our doors like so many other Oregon businesses*** have had to do in recent years. ***No business - no jobs.***

Before considering the passage of this legislation, we ask that you seriously consider the negative impact it will have on small businesses like ours and the employees you are trying to help. Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter from a small businesses owner's point of view.

Sincerely,

Kevin & Lorie Dupee'

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