

April 14, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Lindsey Zuber, thank you for reading my words regarding the multitude of minimum wage bills. After listening to over 3 hours of testimony last night I saw a lot of times when heart and logic did not match up. The dream is when both are right at the same time. The reality of life does not always allow that. I am opposed to the current bills regarding minimum wage increases. I do not consider it to be the right solution in regards to the current problem of helping the 'working poor' while maintaining healthy businesses.

First off, just because I oppose the current bill does not mean I don't care. I have a heart too. I have two young children (4 and 1) and I also have to explain to them why Mommy needs to go to work. I also cry at night when I see them growing up faster than seems humanly possible. I ache for the time I don't get to spend with them. **Sometimes we both have tears when Mommy leaves. That is not a minimum wage issue.** That is a parent who has a job issue. And yes daycare is expensive, but it still equates to lower than minimum wage per hour. So if minimum wage is increased, daycare costs most definitely will increase, as well as eldercare.

It costs a lot of money to raise a child. This should not be a news flash to anyone. If you do not have enough money to meet your own needs, how do you think you are going to be able to take care of another life too? Living within your means applies to children. It is a different scenario if you had a stable job and lost it after having kids, or a major medical issue, but most stories I hear that is not the case. Once again, I do not feel that having children inherently entitles you to a higher wage. That is a choice you made, not an entitlement. (The most amazing choice I ever made I might add, but I have and always will take ownership and responsibility for that choice).

When employers testified saying they think business should pay over minimum wage, DO IT!! Government is not stopping employers from paying people over minimum wage. There is no law or bill saying only pay minimum wage. But not every business is healthy or stable enough to pay every employee over minimum wage. The recession is not so far behind us that we should be forgetting the importance of a stable economy and healthy businesses. A workforce needs all kind of jobs, not just high paying jobs. It is naïve to think we are just dealing with the local economy. That local economy is directly linked to the national economy and therefore connected to the global economy. We cannot overlook how they affect each other and how we can take Oregon right out of the competition with a few hasty decisions. I heard the comment last night that "the sky will not fall." Good chance she is right, but it is proven that businesses will not 'put up with' a non-business friendly environment. **I think the Port of Portland recently taught us a few lessons about how easy it is to stop doing business with Oregon.**

I have a job where I make over minimum wage, as does every single one of my 43 full time coworkers. The only people who make minimum wage are the first year seasonal employees. Every year the seasonal workers come back they get a raise too. Every single employee earns that increase. It is not owed to them. They work hard, they show up, they become more skilled, dedicated employees, and they are appreciated for that. Our employer SHOWS their appreciation for us. By raising the minimum wage, you are taking the tools from employers to have the freedom to develop a functional pay system to keep themselves and the employees successful.

I work in Human Resources. I asked about half of the employees what they think of a minimum wage increase. Every person responded. "No, don't do it." They have worked hard to get to the \$15 – 20 range, and now there is a threat that it will be taken from them. "Who exactly is that big of a jump in minimum wage supposed to help? No thanks, I do not feel like getting a wage cut and paying more for everyday necessities like food." **They understand the correlation - if minimum wage goes up, inflation will immediately follow.**

I agree with my coworkers. I started working before I was even in school, picking strawberries, selling the newspaper, etc. I worked summers on a farm to pay for high school and college, starting at minimum wage. I remember every year as minimum wage jumped being so disappointed because I couldn't get ahead of the minimum wage increases. It took away my raise. When I was 18, summer consisted of harvesting 14 hours a day 7 days a week and during the school year working in a coffee shop while taking 20 credit hours. I made sacrifices to live within my means. I had roommates, because that is what you do when you can't make ends meet. Those choices ended up paying off in that I have a job that I love and pays me a fair wage. But it was not handed to me, it did not come overnight, and it did not come in the industry I initially thought to work in.

The company I work for donates around \$50,000 a year to organizations such as Farmers Ending Hunger, Heat Oregon, Family Tree Relief Nursery, and all the local schools. With a major jump in minimum wage, there would not be a budget for this. **If companies are spread thin, charitable organizations are also going to take a hit.**

Who is going to provide us with jobs if small business owners decide it is no longer profitable and too stressful to stay in business? Many small business owners mentioned at the hearing that some months they do not take a salary in order to keep their doors open and employees paid. Are you seriously asking them to do more than taking no pay for themselves? Big businesses already avoid Oregon and it will guarantee even more move out of state. Raising the minimum wage by 62% (or at all) is not something we, as working Oregonians, support.

From listening to the testimonies I noticed a trend of some key issues:

- If you truly feel minimum wage is an issue, start with it at the Federal level. Keep the nation on a common playing ground.
- The health care industry (including caring for the aging population, and disabled) has a whole set of problems that runs much deeper than minimum wage can fix.
- College can be false advertising. A college degree does not guarantee you an over minimum wage job, especially if your degree is not one that is in demand. Some have never paid a high wage. Some trades, like mechanics for the new technology & equipment, are in great need of skilled laborers, but those jobs have not been promoted / offered among college age students, and they pay well! More appropriate job training needs to be offered.
- If there is a wage increase there needs to be a starting wage for those under 18 that are learning basic job skills. What about a 13 year old babysitting for an afternoon, what are they supposed to be paid?

**I do not think the current proposed minimum wage bills are the fix that Oregon needs.** Though they may be well 'intended,' they are NOT the appropriate solutions. I do not believe that bills should be made into laws because they are a satisfactory option for some. I think it needs to be the absolute best scenario for the people of Oregon and beyond our state. Only then should they be considered for a law.

If you made it to the end of this, THANK YOU for taking my words into consideration. Your time and dedication is much appreciated.