

April 13, 2015

House Business & Labor Committee
Senate Workforce Committee

Re: Proposals to increase statewide minimum wage

Dear House Chair Holvey and Senate Chair Dembrow,

The East Portland Chamber of Commerce represents many local businesses throughout East Portland and we support Oregon's current minimum wage law that indexes the minimum wage each year based on inflation.

We ask that you oppose efforts to increase Oregon's minimum wage further. Increases in the minimum wage would hurt local businesses, result in fewer businesses and jobs, and would not benefit our community.

The minimum wage is intended to be only used for entry level positions with the sole purpose to create a starting job for a person. It was nor should it ever be considered a family wage job. It is unreasonable to think that imposing this new high minimum wage standard will help the workforce. Not only will it hurt businesses it will hurt employees. People will be laid off, not only at the minimum wage level, but at upper wages as well because they will demand a higher wage since the minimum is so much higher. This will trickle up to the other positions to the point that employers cannot afford to keep those employees without raising their prices. Prices for products and services will either be raised significantly to pay for the added employee costs or people will be laid off and or not hired. If prices go up, a person earning the new minimum wage will be proportionally in the same place they were before.

Please stop the insanity. Instead time should be focused on workforce training. Help people get higher paying jobs through training and hard work. Quit trying to enable people into poverty. Lend them a hand to improve their current income by workforce training for better jobs.

I own an architectural firm that employs 12 employees making well over the current minimum wage. Should the minimum wage increase as proposed, my employees will require a higher wage. I will need to raise my hourly rates to my customers in order to afford the higher wages. This will mean that as a small business, my rates will need to creep up to the higher rates of my competitors which are much larger firms or my client base will not be able to afford the smaller firm which could result in less design work and therefore construction projects in the future. This will reduce the amount of clients I have and eventually could force me out of business. Additionally, I compete at a regional level for work. If my hourly rates increase this much I will no longer be competitive in the marketplace and will lose business to firms that have lower rates in other states. I have not even touched on the issues that will result in seasonable and construction workers. This will be a huge problem...

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions and I hope you make the reasonable choice when voting. Vote No against an increase in the minimum wage and keep the current minimum wage law.

Sincerely,

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