



April 13, 2015

Representative Paul Holvey, Chair
Members of the House Business and Labor Committee
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Chair Holvey and Representatives,

Children First wants Oregon to be the best place to be a kid. We strive to make change by advocating for policies that keep children healthy and safe while providing opportunities to allow them to succeed.

However in Oregon too many families are unable to provide their children with the basic necessities to allow their children these opportunities.

- More than one quarter of Oregon mothers with children age three or younger work in low-wage jobs (earning \$10.10 per hour or less).¹
- More than half of Oregon's poor children live in a family where at least one adult works full-time.²
- Despite job growth, Oregon's child poverty rate has actually increased by more than 10% since the end of the recession in 2009.³
- So many Oregon workers are paid so little that the federal and state government spends \$1.7 billion in taxpayer money each year on programs like food stamps and other income supports.⁴

Oregon's minimum wage may be the second highest in the country, but even working full-time, a minimum wage worker does not make enough to lift a family of three out of poverty. A working parent earns only \$19,240 per year working at minimum wage. This is \$850 short of the poverty level for a family of three. It's time for Oregon to help the hard-working parents of these children earn their way out of poverty. It's time to raise Oregon's minimum wage.

Thank you for your attention and your work for Oregon's children.

¹ Blank, Helen, Karen Schulman, and Lauren Frohlich. April 2014. "Nearly One in Five Working Mothers of Very Young Children in Low-Wage Jobs." National Women's Law Center.

² CFFO analysis of American Community Survey Public-Use Microdata 2010-2013. Note: full-time is defined as working at least 35 hours per week.

³ U.S. Census Bureau. CP03: Comparative Economic Characteristics." *2013 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates*. American FactFinder.

⁴ Reddy, Taahi, Daniel Morris, Ellen K. Scott, Bob Bssel, and Shauna Dyer. January 2015. "The High Cost of Low Wages in Oregon." *Oregon Workforce Report 2014*. University of Oregon Labor Education and Research Center.