

**Subject:** Opposition Testimony on HB 2004/2012/2808/2009 SB332/597/610/327/682 Min Wage Increase

I was in attendance last night but ran out of time before being called to testify. Please distribute this testimony to all committee members.

My name is Scott Friedman I'm 37 years of age. I am a business owner with 65-70 employees. My biography is simple. Graduated High School—worked while in HS all 4 years. I paid for Linfield College on my own after starting at OSU for a year. I printed flyers and mowed lawns, pulled weeds for people as a way to earn income while in school. I worked 7 days a week while going to college and continued to do so for the last 10 years to achieve what I have today.

Testimony:

As I sit here listening to the testimony tonight there is common theme amongst those in support of raising the minimum wage. "It is the Fair and right thing to do." The Speaker touched on the following highlights as reasons to raise the minimum wage which was echoed by most testifying:

1. Opportunity for success is out of reach for many
2. They deserve a "fair" shot
3. They work hard
4. They require personal sacrifices to make ends meet
5. They should have the ability to save for a secure retirement
6. They deserve a Fair playing field
7. Great harm by not raising the wage
8. Sole Wage earner cannot support a family
9. The opportunities to coach and spend time with their family does not exist.

Lost in all the testimony tonight are 2 key points.

1. Everyone has/had **choice**. Wage earners at the lowest scale have a choice to better themselves, regardless of how they landed in the lowest wage class. While it may be difficult and taxing, opportunities exist for advancement beyond ones current lot and income level.
  - a. No one is "stuck" working a dead end job at a low wage unless they choose to be with in action
  - b. Everyone not earning minimum wage has done something different than those at minimum wage to earn the higher wages they are receiving.
  - c. Hard work does not equal higher wages for only those at the bottom.
  - d. No one forces a person to incur expenses that exceed their earnings.
  - e. No one makes a person have children and build a family before they cannot afford to at the level they desire.
  - f. Choices rest with the individual—if the current job doesn't pay the wage one desires—train—strive—advance to a job that does.
  - g. Staying home with your child and coaching their sports is a result of planning, sacrifice, and is a luxury not a right.
2. Minimum wage was established in 1938 under the Fair Labor Act—its sole intention was to protect workers from excessive hours and abolish child labor. After 5 years of fighting congress passed the FLA which gave birth to *minimum wage*. The intent as written in the legislation was

to *“Set a wage that meets the minimum standards of living necessary for health efficiency, and general well being of workers.”*

- a. This wage was not intended by design to support a family
- b. This wage does not set forth any conditions of skill, performance, or criteria of education required to attain this wage or wages higher
- c. It is clear the intent is to provide a wage by which the “worker” can have a minimum standard of living. Nothing more

These bills are seeking to pay workers a wage that not only meets minimum standards of living, but provides for more. Many in the business community are looking only at the raw costs. The costs are tremendous and move well beyond the effects of paying the low wage earners more. I am more concerned at the message this sends to the entry level worker. Today I find it hard to find anyone who is willing to be accountable to their own actions. The schools are breeding this mentality by setting the standards lower and lower and providing alternative paths to every measurable that exists. I cannot find people who will work hard and move up. I can hardly fill the jobs I have regardless of wage because they are hard. These laws communicate it's ok to not get educated, not seek advanced training, and you are entitled to a better standard of living by virtue of being a citizen of the State of Oregon, nothing more. This was not the intent of minimum wage. It is a slap in the face to those that have worked at minimum wage in their life and have advanced to wages beyond. There must be an exchange of value for business to succeed! Repetitive tasks requiring little to no skill and training should not support a family nor afford any luxury. It should merely be able to support the individual while they train and gain the skills needed to increase their own value to industry.

Hypothetically, let's simply give everyone 50k at birth. Do not invest it in the stock market since the gains are gotten on the back of low wages. At age 18 let's release the money. Some will likely leverage the 50k into something more, and some will likely not. What do we do for those that by virtue of their choices did not yield the same return? Give them more simply because it's fair that everyone should be able to have the same result regardless of the choices they made?

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