



To: Senate Committee on Workforce & General Government
From: Nancy Haque, Executive Co-Director, Basic Rights Oregon
Re: Support of SB 1532
Date: February 2, 2016

Chair Dembrow and members of the Committee,

My name is Nancy Haque and I am Executive Co-Director of Basic Rights Oregon. I am here today to testify in support of raising the minimum wage in Oregon.

As the state's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer political advocacy organization, Basic Rights speaks on behalf of Oregonians like O'Nesha Cochran, who makes \$146.25 per week and struggles with her partner to keep a roof over their son's head; or like Laura Rondeau, who works two part-time jobs, makes too much to qualify for the Oregon Health Plan, but too little to put any money away in savings; or like Sophia Stanford, a transgender woman who cannot find work in her field because of discrimination and so must scrape by on \$9.25 an hour. We have signed onto the current campaigns to raise the minimum wage because stories like these show us that it is impossible for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer Oregonians to provide for themselves and their families on less than \$20,000 a year. We want to make sure wages increase in 2016.

We believe that legislative action on the minimum wage would provide certainty and predictability for both workers and businesses. We are committed to the ballot measure if a strong proposal cannot pass this session but a meaningful increase in the minimum wage is our end goal.

Therefore, we prefer the -2 amendments, because we believe that it better reflects the high cost of living in the Portland Metro area. The self-sufficiency wage in Multnomah is \$20.84, Clackamas Co is \$20.99, Washington Co. is \$21.09. This is the wage that is calculated on how much it would cost for a household with two adults, a pre-schooler and a school-aged child to afford just the basics.

We understand why the Governor continues to engage with stakeholders to refine her proposal and ensure that all sides are heard in the process. The component of the -1 amendments that is compelling for workers is that it increases wages 50 cents for workers this July. Since there was no CPI this year, this is a meaningful increase. 50 cents is a larger increase in one year than low wage workers have gotten in one year since 1997. While we don't like this proposal as much as the -2 amendments, we do believe it provides a

meaningful increase in the minimum wage for workers. This proposal will give workers an additional \$520 in 2016 to help afford the basics.

We cannot wait any longer while members of the LGBTQ community continue to live at or below the poverty level on sub-standard jobs. We need to minimum wage to meaningfully increase in 2016 and we are urging the legislature to take action.

Thank you for your time.

Nancy Haque, Basic Rights Oregon