

Editorial: Another bad turn by the Legislature

Published Feb 6, 2016 at 12:26AM

The new bad legislative proposal for the state's minimum wage looks like an old bad proposal.

Gov. Kate Brown proposed a two-tiered minimum wage for Oregon. She wanted a \$13.50 state minimum wage by 2022 and a \$15.52 wage for Portland. She has proposed a compromise to bring those down a bit.

Then an earlier idea of three minimum wages for Oregon re-emerged. Portland would hit \$14.75. Nonrural counties, including Deschutes, would get \$13.50. Rural counties, including Crook and Jefferson, would get \$12.50.

We get the concern for low-income families. We get that if the Legislature doesn't act, there may well be a ballot measure aiming for a higher minimum wage than the Legislature is.

But why is the Legislature even talking about it?

If just increasing the minimum wage really worked, why is \$14.75 an hour enough? Shouldn't the state mandate that everyone be rich?

The reason the Legislature doesn't do that is because it does not make economic sense. As dreamy as some are about the minimum wage, they know increases backfire. Prices go up. Businesses can afford to hire fewer people. And it doesn't matter if there are three tiers or three hundred, the increases price some people right out of a job.

Why not look instead to remove some of the state barriers to creating jobs, instead of requiring a wage that will destroy them?

From the Desk of
Senator Ted Ferrioli