

Georgie & Tancher, Portland
House District 45
Fast food worker

SB1532



Barbara Smith Warner
State Representative
District 45

My name is Georgie and I live in Portland with my wife Tancher and our four children. Our oldest is 8, our youngest is 2. I'm an islander from the Federated States Of Micronesia. My wife and I both have health problems so we can only work at certain type of jobs.

Right now my wife is the one that's working. While she works I stay home with the kids and when I work she stays home. Right now we are living in an apartment. We were homeless for about 5 months. Now we are living in low-income apartments. Human Solutions is only able to help us out for about 6 months, so now we are getting help from Home Forward. It's hard to earn enough income to afford a house or an apartment with only one person working. It used to be easier, but prices of everything are going up while minimum wage doesn't.

My wife works at a fast food restaurant. It takes her about 10 minutes to get to and from work, because we are lucky enough to have my dad's old car.

I used to work at a Japanese food factory through a temp agency. I had to stop working because I needed medical help. Before the food factory I used to work at the airport, but I injured my back and started showing hernia symptoms. I've been trying to get help.

Our family brings in about \$400-\$500 twice a month. We always have to take care of the bills first. You know, the rent, the electricity. The 2-bedroom apartment we live in is \$875/month. And like I said, my wife makes between \$800 and \$1,000/month. Home Forward pays about 70% of the rent.

The rents in Oregon are going up every year or even in the middle of a year, but the pay still stays the same. During our time living as homeless in the shelters, we noticed that most of the homeless people were having the same problem, and that was why we turned to Human Solutions. Though Human Solutions only promised to help for a few months, so as soon as their help is over, we always end up at the same place (shelters).

In the end, it's not enough. We have had to give up pretty much all the things that we want. Most of the stuff we receive are from donations from the homeless shelter and friends. I am a married guy with 4 kids. We've been in living in Portland for almost 4 years, and we've been homeless twice in that time due to eviction, usually because of the numbers of people living together because we couldn't afford living on our own.

I moved from my homeland to seek better education, better health care, and a better way of life under the impression that the USA will honor the compact they made with my country. My people are the only ones outside of the U.S that do not require visa card or green cards, though we are not treated as promised in the compact. I hope that this change in minimum wage can at least happen to better mine and my family's lives, and other people who come to the U.S.

From the Desk of : *Barbara Smith Warner*