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SB 1532 A

Steve, Salem
House District 20
Business Owner

From the Desk of
**Representative
Jennifer Williamson**

My name is Steve Weiss, and I am a small business owner here in Salem - I co-own Tritac Shooting Solutions with my son, it's an indoor shooting range and gun shop - and I support the minimum wage increase now being debated in the Capitol. I want to share my story because I want to make it clear that the business lobby that you have been hearing from doesn't speak for me, or many other business owners in our state.

My employees are my greatest asset, and investing in them is good for my business. We pay our employees a starting wage of \$12 an hour, and most get \$14-15 an hour. We try to be good citizens and pay our employees well so they have enough to live on. It would not be a hardship or cause us to raise prices if this law was enacted. Wages are just one part of the cost of doing business, and this increase - especially because it's phased in - is not only doable but won't drastically increase my prices. If I had to raise the wages of my new employees a couple of dollars an hour, it would raise my overall costs less than 1%, which would hardly make us uncompetitive. It's also small compared to the benefits I get from loyal, more productive employees.

Unfortunately, not everyone in the community is paying good wages. When other businesses don't pay a living wage, we are at a disadvantage. Plus, when workers are paid so little they rely on public assistance like food stamps, it means my taxes go up. It's not a good use of my tax dollars to be subsidizing businesses that don't pay decent wages. We should be spending that money on other things. Raising the minimum wage levels the playing field for small businesses like mine.

When workers in our community have more money to spend, there will be more money flowing in the economy, which is good for all of us.