

## Testimony in support of SB 1532 -2 amendments

Respectfully submitted by Joe Baessler, Political Director Oregon AFSCME

Oregon AFSCME exists to support working people. We work to help and improve the lives of not only our members but all Oregonians and their opportunity to have a living wage with security and have a better life through work. The minimum wage is the only way to secure a chance of economic success for a huge number of Oregonians. Over the last few years we have worked hard to target our lowest paid members around the state and bargained to increase their wages to a floor of \$15 an hour. We have been successful in many locals including the Housing Authority of Portland, City of Portland and Multnomah County. This work is important but it is not enough we need a raise for all Oregonians. The rising cost of housing is most significant in urban areas but it is not just a Portland problem. All over the state working people are being pushed to the brink by housing costs and childcare costs and crushing debt. The only way for Oregon to curb the growing inequality in incomes is to significantly increase the minimum wage.

While there are many in our union that are angry that we are not supporting only a raise to \$15 dollars an hour for all Oregonians, Oregon AFSCME has worked with the Raise the Wage Coalition to draft the current \$13.50 measure. We support both campaigns and we are willing to go to the ballot if the legislature is unable to act. As a compromise we are supportive of the dash 2 amendments to SB 1532. We understand that it is important to compromise and try to come up with a solution that while not everyone supports fully it is somewhere in the middle. We know that the numbers in the dash 2 amendments are not high enough to allow a family to reach self-sufficiency in the Metro region but it is a solid step in the right direction. This proposal gives clear guidelines to businesses and workers. While we like our ballot measures more because of the increased time period for the increase we can support the dash 2 amendments.

We are not opposed to the dash 1 amendments but they are clearly a step down from the dash 2 amendments. We understand the Governor is working to come up with a compromise and a solution and we support her efforts. We think that the July 2016, 50 cent raise in the dash 1 amendments is a great start. In a perfect world we would have the 50 cent raises right away and we would also remove the pre-emptions on local governments from raising their own minimum wage. We realize that it is not a perfect world and so we can support the progress the Governor is making. We will continue to push for our represented workers to have the best wages possible so they can afford to buy a house and send their children to college. You can work to help all the other low wage workers in Oregon by passing SB 1532-2. Please support SB 1532 with the dash 2 amendments.

Joe Baessler  
Political Director  
Oregon AFSCME