

Senator Dembrow, Chair
and Committee members

February 2, 2016

SB 1532

I do not support this measure. My better half and I own a gun store in La Grande, Oregon. Every year for the past 10 years we talked about hiring an employee as one or the other of us always had to be running the store. We took no vacations together and had to play musical chairs to go to doctor appointments, etc.

I am sure you are aware of the poor reputation that Oregon has in terms of being small business friendly. That situation has been even further solidified by requirements such as mandatory sick leave, health insurance requirements, workers compensation, unemployment, social security, etc.

In order to hire an employee, we would also have to be open more than the 4 ½ days a week we currently are, as we would need to increase our total sales. We now have to consider the increase in our taxes due to the taxes on gross receipts as opposed to net.

After considering the real cost of having an employee, each year we decided we could not justify the costs. I am sure there are many other "potential employers" in this state that are making the same decision we did. Increasing the minimum wage will also increase all related costs associated with the employee programs. This increase can only mean that there will be more current and potential employers who will make the same decision we have.

I would like to make one additional comment:

Democracy does not exist unless the citizens have a voice. Starting about 4 years ago, it started becoming common for the governor and legislators to intervene to stop the initiative process and move decisions into the legislature.

This bill is an example of that process. No senator or representative could claim that the current legislative process provides for a serious opportunity for the public to be heard. That problem is even more exaggerated in a short session such as this. The legislators do not have time to adequately assess the bills they are voting on. The Citizens have little or no opportunity to do so, and even if they do, it is likely their voice will not be heard. That problem is made even more egregious by virtue of the fact that for this and the prior session, a huge percentage of the bills contained an emergency clause which effectively silences the people. I believe that the citizens could do a better job through the initiative process than the legislature given the fact that this session is focusing on multiple significant changes with long range impacts as opposed to tweeking existing programs as was stated at the point that the public voted to support these sessions. No disrespect intended, but given how the short sessions are being used, I believe the state would be better served by allowing the democratic process through a vote of the people.