

Chair Holvey and committee –

The Dream-makers

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Flashback to last Thursday, February 11th and I'm on an airplane flying home from Washington DC. I had been there working with members of the US Congress to work through trade barriers for forage exports, as well as pushing to improve our west coast ports. But, while I'm waiting for the flight, and even while I'm walking onto the plane, I'm streaming live the minimum wage debate on the Senate Floor of the Oregon Legislature. I had to turn it off when the plane took off, and then received updates via wifi (thank goodness for modern technology!) on the flight from my friends that were watching back home. There were many who fought hard to explain *why* this bill should not be voted through. Ultimately, **after a 6 hour debate, the minimum wage bill, SB1532-A, was voted through 16-12.** On to the House now. I'm now crying on a plane. I'm the window seat, and I have no where to go, and can't stop crying. I know I'm tired from meetings in DC from sun up to sun down, and the daily fight to get the Oregon Legislature and beyond to understand business principles, and the importance of Oregon Agriculture and Oregon Small Business. But I'm just so damn sad. I'm sad for Oregon's future. I'm sad for Oregon's blind and mute "leaders". I'm sad for all Oregonians. I'm sad for those poverty-stricken and the unemployed as I truly believe this will raise poverty and increase unemployment. I'm sad because the word "business" is looked upon with such disgust and it seems we are bad people – that we want to increase poverty for more profits. Are you kidding me? Look at me, my family and my life and what I represent – agriculture, small business, community service, family and faith. I want business to thrive – because then I can offer **more jobs, higher wages, and increase the local economy.** At what point did Oregonians stop believing this? I'm mostly sad at the huge disparity and lack of empathy for each side of the aisle.

So, here I am crying. And this is why... Representative Carl Wilson, District 3, on the House Floor yesterday sums it up perfectly on his floor speech. He reads:

An Ode to the Small Business Owner

There's two types of business dreamers in this world: Entrepreneurs and Want-repreneurs. Anyone can come up with a great business idea, but it takes a special type of *crazy* to drop everything and *will* that idea into reality. As any entrepreneur will tell you, there's a long and *difficult journey* between the moment inspiration strikes and the day the doors open. Even the smallest businesses take long hours, incredible sacrifice, and endless desire to *make it happen*. Here's to the courageous ones, the crazy ones, the wild-eyed visionaries who never took no for an answer. Here's to the self-starters, the bootstrappers, the credit card maxers who trade living for today for *dreaming of tomorrow*. Here's to the brave few who make the world run. Here's to the Small Business Owner.

Representative Wilson finishes with:

“I trust that you will remember these dream-makers; these people who sacrifice everything to provide needed services for their communities. I still maintain and will always maintain that what we are apparently about to do in this chamber on minimum wage is going to be a death blow to the dreams of hundreds of these folks in the state of Oregon.”

For Salem Democrats, on the behest of Governor Kate Brown, to push an extremely dividing and possibly catastrophic decision in a few short weeks because of fear of special interests is in one word: **irresponsible**.

I have many ideas, and many complaints, and many reasons as to why this shouldn't pass. To read more on the minimum debate from my perspective, [read here](#). But I'm going to go with three big ones.

1. It's too fast. The fiscal impact and unintended consequences are unknown and there is no way to have properly vetted this.
2. The wage is too high! It doesn't account for unique needs of industries such as agriculture and food processing, among others. Again – not enough time to look into and research, and *listen* to those of us that know!
3. Separating the state into three tiers based on county lines is not economically or geographically sound. Farms cross county lines, economies are significantly different in different areas of a county. For example, Linn County where I live has a larger urban area – Albany – but has much of the county in rural and timber land. Benton County has Corvallis, but also a large rural area. You could say the same for Lane County, Polk County, Marion County, Yamhill County, and others. ALSO another reason this has NOT been properly vetted and researched.

In the slim chance a legislator is reading this, I'm imploring you on behalf of small business, hard work, employment of youth, exports, transportation, rural Oregon, seniors living on a fixed income, agriculture, the strong dollar for toughness in exports, Oregon's economy, poverty and unemployment: **Vote NO on SB-1532-A**. The future of OUR state depends on your sense of responsibility. I pledge I will fight beside you to give everyone a fighting chance to earn a raise, to land a job, to decrease unemployment and poverty, and to live a life they've earned – not one they've been given. I will do my part to work hard every day to keep our employees employed, and will continue to boost my local community. Don't take that opportunity away from me. Please.

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