

02-15-16

House Committee on Business and Labor

Testimony in opposition to SB 1532 A

Please vote a resounding NO on this bill. *This bill is total warfare on the disabled, the elderly or anyone else on fixed retirement income.* This proposal for increasing the minimum wage only serves to exacerbate the economic disparity between rural and urban Oregon. It is warfare on private businesses, agriculture and the services local government provides.

While you try to help the burger flipping high school dropout and the lazy under achievers make more money, remember there are those who are disabled, retired, on fixed pensions, SSI and other retirement/disability income that are unable to compete or make up for an economy based on \$13 to \$15 an hour minimum wage income. You are throwing these folks "under the bus". These people did the right thing and planned for their retirement based on realistic wages and prices of goods and services. Now here come the righteous political factions to take all of that away from them.

I thought my retirement pension was O.K.. Not great, but O.K.. If you figure the pension over a 40 hour work week, it computes to a figure less than your proposed Portland minimum wage. My wife's SSI won't even pay for her insurance so you want to add on even more burden. By passing this bill, you will have effectively moved my wife and I from the middle class to under the lower class. Not only will the retired be moved down the food chain, a lot of us will be forced to TRY and return to work which probably won't be feasible or possible.

You have tried to take the COLA away from Public Employee Retiree's, and succeeded for those hired after the 2013 legislation, thus reducing their ability to keep up with inflation and other cost of living factors, such as this drastic increase in the minimum wage. The Federal Government bases the COLA for Social Security recipients on Cost of Living, but I am willing to bet you will not see 64% increase in the SSI COLA to match the Portland/Eugene wage increase.

How about an amendment to this bill dictating a 64% increase to all PERS pensions and all SSI recipients to match the increase in minimum wages?

What are you people thinking? The 15 year old will make lots of money to buy the new X Box, if he can find a job, the High School dropout will scream about not finding a job because the work force is being cut. The price of marijuana will go up to \$1000 p/gram, and *Grandma and Grandpa, the disabled and retiree's from all walks of life can eat dog food because they can no longer go to the grocery store and buy nutritional food.*

I thought that the "Spirit of the Law" for even year sessions was about fixing or clarifying legislation passed during the last session, real and **true emergencies** that had come up. I thought it was a time to work on budget tweaks necessary until the next full session. I didn't think it was a time to work through cumbersome 13 amendments or a time to address back yard water squabbles.

In conclusion, for once I actually agree with the Oregonian, "If the governor and state lawmakers care deeply about low-income and retired Oregonians, they'll leave the minimum wage where it is and oppose – vigorously – any attempt to raise it further by initiative."

It has also reaffirmed my resolve to do anything and everything I can to take the emergency clause away from the legislature. **You folks have misused and abused it so badly, you do not deserve to have the ability or right to use it.** **This bill is just one more example of that.**

Jim Mischel

Sheridan, Oregon