

February 15, 2016
To: House Business and Labor Committee
From: Jeremy Booth
Re: Support of SB 1532

Dear Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jeremy Booth and I'd like to share with you my experience as a low wage worker. When I first moved to Eugene, I had three part time jobs, all of which paid minimum wage. Plus, I was going the University of Oregon full time. I was fortunate enough to have a cousin in town with whom I was able live and split the rent.

Most months were divided into what I could cover with which paycheck. Usually my biggest check plus half of the next biggest would go to rent. The rest would cover all other bills, and finally what was left after that went to what little groceries I could afford. I spent the second half of most months subsisting on peanut butter and jelly, Bologna sandwiches, or Raman noodles. I couldn't afford luxuries like nutritious food.

At one point, I had a medical issue and went to urgent care. I couldn't afford to pay the bill. It was eventually sent to collections.

At the university I attended previous to U of O, I was on the Dean's list nearly every quarter. Now in Eugene, while attempting to hold everything together, my grades suffered greatly. I spent most days being exhausted and wondering when I'd have time for a good night's rest.

Even with three jobs making minimum wage, I couldn't afford to really live. I didn't feel like I was worth much. I've spent the last ten years climbing out of that dark place. My credit score has finally recovered enough that I can get a loan without atrociously high interest rates.

I was raised on the idea that if one works hard enough, one can achieve anything. Needless to say, I worked as hard as anyone, and I barely felt worthy to be human, let alone able to achieve anything. Please vote yes on Raise the Wage. You're not just voting to help people out of poverty and stimulate Oregon's economy, but you're also voting to recognize the dignity and improve the self worth of Oregonians.

Jeremy Booth
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