



To: House Committee on Business & Labor
From: Nancy Haque, Executive Co-Director, Basic Rights Oregon
Re: Raise The Wage
Date: February 15, 2016

Chair Hovey, and members of the Committee,

My name is Nancy Haque and I am Executive Co-Director of Basic Rights Oregon. Basic Rights Oregon signed on to the current Raise the Wage campaign as well as \$ 15 now, because we know that it is not possible to provide for yourself and your family on less than \$20,000 a year and we wanted to take action to make sure wages are increased in 2016.

As the state's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer political advocacy organization, Basic Rights speaks on behalf of Oregonians like O'Nesha Cochran, who makes \$146.25 per week and struggles with her partner to keep a roof over their son's head; or like Laura Rondeau, does not make enough working full time to finish her degree; or like Sophia Stanford, a transgender woman who cannot find work in her field because of discrimination and so must scrape by on \$9.25 an hour. We have signed onto the current campaigns to raise the minimum wage because stories like these show us that it is impossible for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer Oregonians to provide for themselves and their families on less than \$20,000 a year. We want to make sure wages increase in 2016.

We believe that legislative action on the minimum wage would provide certainty and predictability for both workers and businesses. While we may prefer the ballot measures, a meaningful increase in the minimum wage is our end goal.

The Senate vote last week is recognition that no matter where you live in Oregon, you can't get by on just \$19,240 a year. However, while it is encouraging to see 16 Senators stand up for working Oregonians and vote to raise the minimum wage, this proposal falls short of what we know workers need to support their families. \$12.50 an hour is not enough to support a family, no matter where you work or what job you do.

We cannot wait any longer while members of the LGBTQ community continue to live at or below the poverty level on sub-standard jobs. We need to minimum wage to meaningfully increase in 2016 and we are urging the legislature to take action.

Thank you for your time.

Nancy Haque, Basic Rights Oregon