

February 15, 2016

To: House Business and Labor Committee
From: Bryan Colbourne, Oregon Center for Christian Voices (OCCV)
Re: Support of SB 1532A

Chair Holvey and Committee Members,

My name is Bryan Colbourne and I am here today on behalf of the Oregon Center for Christian Voices (OCCV) and speaking in favor of SB 1532A

We believe Scripture is clear that one of God's intended roles for government is to ensure that poor and marginalized people are cared for. Proverbs 3:27 says, "Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act."

Across our state, we are facing a moral and economic challenge. Members of our community—our neighbors, our relatives, our congregants—are working full-time jobs, but still earning so little that they struggle just to put food on the table and care for their families.

Those in our community earning minimum wage are caring for the elderly, serving us meals, and keeping our buildings clean. And after they've put in a full day at their jobs, they're being forced to choose between paying the rent or buying groceries. That is why demand at food banks is still at an all-time high in spite of the dramatic drop in unemployment over the past several years. We can't expect families to survive on \$9.25 an hour. It's time to raise the minimum wage.

As we have these discussions, it is also important to acknowledge the reality that Oregon's rural and urban economies are not the same. The cost of supporting a family in Portland is not the same as the cost to support a family in the more rural parts of the state. That is why we support the bill that was passed by the Senate with three tiers.

It is the church's role to be the conscience of our society, and to remind our political leaders that they have a moral obligation to care for their communities. We believe that if someone is working full time, they ought to be able to afford food, shelter, and healthcare for themselves and their families while living a life of dignity and respect. To do that today for all Oregonians requires an increase in the minimum wage.

We urge you to support SB 1532A.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bryan Colbourne". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bryan Colbourne
Board Member, Oregon Center for Christian Voices