

February 15, 2016

To: House Business and Labor Committee

From: FIRST AND LAST NAME, AFFILIATION OR EMPLOYER (if appropriate)

Re: Support of SB 1532A

Chair Holvey and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Kathleen Jonathan and I am here today to ask you to vote yes on SB 1532 to raise the minimum wage in Oregon.

I am a community school outreach coordinator for the Marshallese students in Salem-Keizer Public Schools. Many families send their children here from the Marshall Islands for educational and other opportunities like the K-12 and ESL program our schools provide. For those that do not know, the Marshallese people have a "free association" compact that allows them to travel and immigrate to the US freely. That status stems from the use of the islands as a U.S. nuclear testing area starting in 1946 and ongoing military bases there.

Many of the students we serve are from low income households and I see the struggle and the sacrifices their families make to provide the basic necessities for their students. When other costs like health insurance or medical bills arise it makes it even harder for them to make ends meet.

As part of my job I also help students apply for college, financial aid services, and other post secondary opportunities and I know that many of these children and their families will have to make tough choices between paying for and going to college and taking on the financial and other household responsibilities as their younger siblings and other family members seek the same educational opportunities they were afforded because of the sacrifices of other family members.

Raising the minimum wage would allow these students and their families to participate in all the opportunities available to them rather than needing to choose between meeting today's most basic needs like food and gas and allowing graduates to go to college or seek post high-school educational opportunities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kathleen Jonathan