

February 15, 2016

Dear Oregon Representatives,

We would like to urge you to vote against the proposed minimum wage increase. As a small business owner, we are facing a growing number of new regulations that are going to cause a substantial burden. Not only are we facing the minimum wage increase but also the recent mandatory sick leave regulations. In addition, the cost of health care for us individually, has almost doubled in the last 15 months. We cannot continue to bear the load of more regulatory costs.

As a small business owner in agriculture, the financial burden is even greater. Our commodity prices are unstable and currently on a decline, but, our regulatory costs are continuing to climb in every aspect. Every year the legislature imposes more and more on the business owner.

A year ago, our business started planning an expansion. This expansion would have employed more people. After listening to proposals that were in the making, we decided that automation was to be a part of our expansion, not employees. As a result, the installation of automated equipment, will not only eliminate the hiring new employees it will replace 3.5 current employees. We are currently evaluating other positions in our business for additional automation.

As a resident of Eastern Oregon, the increase in minimum wages will impact towns along the Idaho border. Already business owners are looking to relocate their business across the border into Idaho.

This increase in minimum wage will not only hurt the business owners, it will hurt the consumers. How will consumers react when their grocery and household costs have a substantial increase? How about the senior citizens on a fixed income?

Minimum wage was not meant to be a permanent way of living. It was designed as a starting place for trainees and for teens starting to work. With this increase, you will also be eliminating the possibility of teens or young adults being hired. For the future of small business, the affordable cost of consumer needs and future economic growth of the state, please vote in opposition of this bill.

Thank you,

Warren and Lori Chamberlain
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