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Union-led coalition seeks \$13.50 minimum wage

Union-backed Raise the Wage Oregon also would restore cities' right to go higher

By Don McIntosh
 Associate Editor

A new coalition of more than two dozen groups will campaign to raise Oregon's minimum wage to \$13.50 statewide — and restore the right of local communities to pass higher local minimum wages. The Raise the Wage Oregon campaign will push for legislation in the February 2016 session of the Oregon Legislature, but if lawmakers fail to act, coalition leaders say they will work to take a ballot measure to voters in November 2016.

Labor groups in the coalition include the Oregon AFL-CIO, Oregon Education Association, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555, AFSCME Council 75, the Oregon Nurses Association, and Service Employees International Union. Other groups include Causa, Family Forward Oregon, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, Basic Rights Oregon, Oregon Bus Project, Urban League of Portland, and Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon.

"No one who works full time



"Raising the minimum wage and restoring local control will help build an economy that works for everyone, not just the richest among us," said Andrea Miller (at the mic), executive director of the Latino civil rights group Causa. Miller was one of several speakers at a July 22 launch of a new coalition, Raise the Wage Oregon.

should live in poverty," said Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain at the coalition's July 22 campaign launch. The event took place at Firefighters Memorial Park in Portland — across the street from the McDonalds restaurant at West Burnside and 18th Avenue. "We want to raise the wage to \$13.50 for all Oregonians, and restore cities' power to

pass a higher minimum wage, so cities like Portland, Salem, and Eugene can follow the lead of Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles," Chamberlain said. All three of the latter cities have approved local ordinances to raise the minimum wage over time to \$15 an hour, but Oregon's legislature passed a law in 2001 barring local jurisdictions from passing higher local mini-

mum wages. Oregon's minimum is currently \$9.25 an hour. Raise the Wage Oregon takes up where a substantially similar coalition, Fair Shot Oregon, left off. Raising the minimum wage was one of five proposals Fair Shot Oregon took to the Oregon Legislature in the session that ran from February to early July

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