

## Lowest Wage to Rise

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businesses is never easy.

"Times are hard enough," McMurtry said.

"I believe everyone should get paid for the work they do," she said. "But if minimum wage were not quite as high, then the employer would have more latitude to reward good workers."

Oregon's current minimum wage is the nation's second highest, trailing only Washington \$8.67 minimum hourly wage. The state is also one of 18 states plus the District of Columbia that have a minimum wage above the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour, which is not scheduled to increase.

Even though Oregon has a higher minimum wage than other states, it is not enough to prevent poverty among some working families.

Shketoff said at \$8.80 an hour, a full-time minimum wage worker will earn \$18,304, still below the 2011 federal poverty guideline for a family of three (\$18,530). He said the Oregon minimum wage, however, does lift one- and two-per-

proportion of individuals working in or at minimum wage," he said.

Estabrook explained, in any industry where you are working on thin margins and depend more on volume, planning ahead is essential to deal with the increasing minimum wage, and some businesses may be better able to adjust than others.

He said, however, they understand these businesses are feeling the pinch in terms of other costs, including the increase of the Consumer Price Index in one year, which not only affects working families, but also business entrepreneurs. "Obviously it is not as simple as raising prices," he said.

Tuan Huynh Ba, the owner of Tuan's 76 Auto Service at 33rd Avenue and Northeast Killingsworth, said the rise in wages will definitely affect his business. "I don't know if I can afford it. I can't raise the price of gas," he said.

While increased wages is a positive for those who have jobs, he asked, what about those who don't? "My garage, business has slowed down because people can't afford to fix their car because they don't have jobs," he

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— Bob Estabrook, communications director for the state bureau

son families out of poverty.

"Oregonians were smart to raise the minimum wage and keep it from being eroded by inflation," he said. "Oregon's minimum wage system helps fight poverty and income inequality and is a model for the nation."

According to Avakian, minimum wage laws are essential to ensure workers and families can maintain their purchasing power, which keeps the local economy afloat.

Although, he said, five out of six employers within Oregon don't offer minimum wage jobs, future dialogue is necessary with businesses, and many small businesses that do. "Understanding their challenges," he said, "will benefit our entire economy."

Bob Estabrook, the communications director for the state bureau, said the impact of the minimum wage increase on entrepreneurs is not as simple as saying small businesses could be hurt and large businesses will be in the clear.

"You have to look at a particular workforce a business has; this is especially true for the food and beverage industry, which has a larger

said. "The rise in prices has affected everybody."

According to Estabrook, inflation and a rise in prices does not come as a surprise to the general population.

"I think most folks generally recognize the cost has been going up and inflation is happening," he said. "The annual adjustment of our state minimum wage is designed to account for inflation and prices, so someone making minimum wage is not progressively losing the value in their wages based on inflation."

Like Avakian, Estabrook emphasized the importance of maintaining dialogue with businesses, especially small businesses, and he said entrepreneurs, through BOLI's Technical Assistance for Employers Program, are invited to call with questions, concerns and challenges they are facing.

Revised minimum wage posters reflecting the new rate will also be available for free download from BOLI's website in December. That site, which includes additional information about all of BOLI's activities, is [oregon.gov/BOLI](http://oregon.gov/BOLI).



## Physical Activity to Fight Obesity

First lady Michelle Obama hits a tennis ball to highlight the importance of physical activity for kids at the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York during the U.S. Open earlier this month. Mrs. Obama has been campaigning against childhood obesity and praised the U.S. Tennis Association's initiative to build kid-sized courts. (AP photo)

## Obama on Fire over Jobs, Taxes

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gency workers.

On Monday, Obama spelled out a long-term debt stabilizing plan that aims to cut the deficit by about \$3 trillion over 10 years. Obama is making his proposal to a special congressional committee that has been charged with lowering deficit by \$1.2 trillion to \$1.5 trillion.

"But right now, we've got to get Congress to pass this jobs bill," Obama said.

Obama's jobs plan has received a tepid reception from Republicans, who are willing to consider some of his tax relief proposals, but not his spending plans. His proposal to pay for the plan with limits on tax deductions and closing corporate tax loopholes is facing stiff GOP resistance, and even Democrats have pushed back on some of those provisions in the past.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said simply approving tax cuts without including spending on public works and local and state government assistance would not do enough to spur the economy.



President Barack Obama

"To take one piece or another, it doesn't create the dynamism we need," she said.

Rep. Peter Roskam of Illinois called on Obama to reduce regulations on businesses, saying government agency rules were choking off hiring. "Washington has become a red tape factory," he said.

He pressed Obama to push the Democratic-controlled Senate to adopt House Republican initiatives, including legislation that would give Congress veto power over certain high-cost regulations.

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