



For Immediate Release

**September 17, 2014**

CONTACT: Charlie Burr, (971) 673-0788 office

## **Avakian announces 2015 minimum wage increase for 141,000 workers**

*Wage floor adjustment will boost consumer buying power, strengthen economy, says Avakian*

**PORTLAND**—Oregon Labor and Industries Commissioner Brad Avakian today announced that Oregon's minimum wage will increase to \$9.25 on January 1, 2015, providing a \$.15 per hour raise for 141,822 workers.

"Oregon's minimum wage helps workers keep pace with the rising cost of goods while boosting the purchasing power of consumers around the state," said Commissioner Avakian. "With this increase in Oregon's wage floor, more than 140,000 Oregonians will have more money to make ends meet – and more money to spend at local businesses. That's good for everyone."

The adjustment will mean that minimum wage earners working 30 hours a week will have \$234 more to spend on goods in 2015. The increase is expected to generate more than \$25 million in new consumer spending for Oregon's economy next year.

Each year, Commissioner Avakian calculates the minimum wage by measuring the increase to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), a figure published by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics to track prices for a fixed "market basket" of goods. Passed by a coalition of senior, hunger and labor advocates in 2002, Oregon's minimum wage system ensures that workers don't lose ground to inflation.

"We all do better when people in our communities can make ends meet," said Patti Whitney-Wise of the Oregon Hunger Task Force. "By increasing family economic security, this rise in the minimum wage will help people afford more nutritious food for their families. When we help people invest in good nutrition, we help create great communities for us all to live in. Family economic security is the foundation for prosperous, stable communities."

One common misconception about employees earning a minimum wage is that they are mostly teenagers. However, according to the Economic Policy Institute, roughly 80-percent of all minimum wage workers living in states with an indexed minimum wage last year were at least 20 years old.

"About two-thirds of minimum wage workers in Oregon are women, and increasingly women are primary and co-breadwinners in their families - and our communities," said Andrea Paluso of Family Forward. "The stereotype that minimum wage workers are inexperienced teens wanting pocket change simply isn't the case. Truth is, Oregon women and their families depend more and more on what women earn to pay the bills."

The 2015 minimum wage increase will affect roughly eight percent of Oregon's workforce.

Oregon employers are required to post minimum wage posters. Downloadable posters for 2015 reflecting the new minimum wage rate will be available on BOLI's website later this week free of charge.

###