



Press Release

For Immediate Release

March 14, 2013

CONTACT: Charlie Burr, (971) 673-0788 office, (503) 913-5407 cell.

Avakian Touts Oregon Experience At Federal Minimum Wage Hearing

“American workers deserve a raise,” says Oregon Labor Commissioner Avakian

PORTLAND—Oregon Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian testified today before the U.S. Senate’s Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee about Oregon’s success raising the minimum wage and indexing to inflation so that wages keep pace with the costs of everyday living.

The hearing – convened by Chairman Tom Harkin (D-IA) – represents the first discussion of minimum wage indexing at the federal level in several decades. Last week, Sen. Harkin and Rep. George Miller (D-CA) [introduced](#) the *Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2013*, which would raise the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour and provide for automatic annual increases linked to changes in the cost of living.

“We can build a stronger economy and middle class by making sure that workers have the purchasing power they need to buy local goods and services,” said Labor Commissioner Avakian. **“Oregon’s experience shows how an indexed minimum wage can help workers keep pace with inflation and the rising cost of household essentials. American workers deserve a raise – and I appreciate the leadership of Chairman Harkin for raising this important issue.”**

A broad coalition of senior, labor, religious and hunger security organizations helped pass Oregon’s voter-enacted minimum wage law in 2002. As Labor Commissioner, Avakian oversees implementation of the law and its cost of living annual adjustment. For the past ten years, the Oregon minimum wage has seen steady – and modest – increases, providing businesses with greater certainty and predictability for payroll expenses over time.

“Oregon’s experience with our voter-enacted minimum wage after ten years has shown that indexing produces steady, predictable wage increases that help workers while providing businesses with greater certainty when for payroll expenses over time,” said Avakian.

Written testimony and supporting wage data are available upon request.

###

BOLI protects all Oregonians from unlawful discrimination, investigating allegations of civil rights violations in workplaces, career schools, housing and public accommodations, and enforces compliance with state laws relating to wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment. For more information about BOLI’s efforts to protect workplaces and the civil rights of all Oregonians, visit <http://www.oregon.gov/BOLI>.