

Because We Care – Beyond Inclusion Seattle, WA

Public comments submitted to Seattle Office of Labor Standards regarding the elimination of Special Certificates.

Unfortunately, these were tabulated incorrectly and the contents of the letters appear to have not been read “carefully” as our community was told. **There were 36 comments submitted in FAVOR of keeping the special certificates and 31 comments to eliminate the certificates.**

Karina Bull, Policy Manager for OLS reported during Seattle City Council Committee Meeting on March 29, 2018 that there was a “slight preference for elimination of certificates” which was incorrect.

After I received the public comments and read them myself, I was shocked at the inaccurate portrayal of what was written. The 36 comments in favor of the special certificates are all individualized and give great insight into the variety of needs and supports of this population.

On the other hand, the majority of the 31 comments in favor of elimination were from a coalition of people in local advocacy agencies which do not understand the needs of this population or are copied/pasted templates of the letter sent out from one Commissioner in a plea to submit comments.

I then wrote to Karina Bull asking her to re-read the comments because what was publicly presented clearly did not represent the actual comments received.

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The response I received was “Regarding our office’s consideration of public comments on the proposed rule for prohibiting special certificates for employees with a disability, please know that our office carefully considered the comments. ***As with any rule process, our office evaluated the feedback in terms of qualitative and quantitative content.***” (italics are my edit)

Below are all the comments received by OLS. Read for yourself and determine if you believe they were evaluated in terms of qualitative and quantitative content.

Public Comments to Office of Labor Standards in FAVOR of keeping special certificates

1. From: blondie1958@comcast.net <blondie1958@comcast.net>

Sent: Thursday, August 17, 2017 4:01 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: Proposed Rule Change to Eliminate Subminimum Wages for People with Disabilities and more Secure Scheduling Updates

I'm sending you my comments, as an employer in Seattle.



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1. I think the type of disability, and work required must be taken into account. If a person in a wheelchair is fully mentally competent and can work at a job requiring only mental capabilities, then they should be paid the full minimum wage. However, if the disability interferes with completing the required tasks of the job, i.e. that worker is slower than another, non-disabled worker is, then the employer has no incentive to hire the disabled worker at the full minimum wage, when he/she could hire a fully productive worker at the same wage.

2. I was, coincidentally, thinking about just this issue the other day. I've had an employee working for me for 3 years now, and he still can't grasp what the job requires. I consider him "mentally deficient". I've tried giving him other responsibilities that might be more suited to his abilities, but he can't handle that either. He has never been truly diagnosed as "mentally deficient", but he is. I was just thinking that I should either hire someone who can handle the job, or pay him less. I hired him as a favor to his mom, but after 3 years, I still have to review all of his work and can't leave him on his own. I put up with it because he helps me to some degree, but I don't think I should have to pay him the same as other, fully competent employees.

Therefore, in summary, I disagree that people with disabilities should be paid the same as fully capable employees, but it totally depends on the job, the skills required, the abilities or inabilities of that disabled worker and all factors must be considered.

BTW - nowhere on the Labor Laws poster we are required to post, does it state that disabled workers CAN be paid less than minimum wage - so I didn't even know that was a fact at this time. It's negligent of the Dept. of Labor and Industries to omit that standard.

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Thanks,
Robin

2. From: Virginia Arnoux <varnoux@seanet.com>

Sent: Friday, August 18, 2017 11:10 AM
To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>
Subject: Subminimum Wage

Good Morning,

I am very concerned about the possibility of increasing the minimum wage for Disabled People. My daughter is Disabled and has a job working with a company that works with dogs. I am very fearful that if the company is required to pay her the regular minimum wage they will not be able to cover the increase and my daughter will be laid off.

I would rather we keep the wages at the subminimum wage and **keep the disabled working**. As a bookkeeping business we have already noticed that especially the small businesses are closing because of the higher minimum wage. It is just logical that if wages go up than the costs for the consumer is naturally having to go up to pay the wages and taxes, or they choose not to go out and spend their money.



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PLEASE, DO NOT CHANGE THE LAW IN REGARDS TO SUBMINIMUM WAGE, I WOULD RATHER MY CHILD BE PAID JUST A LITTLE LESS AND STILL HAVE A JOB.

Virginia Arnoux
Owner
ARNOUX BOOKKEEPING SERVICE INC
P. O. Box 25469
Seattle, WA 98165
206-440-1655

- 3. From: Matt <mattgordon64@gmail.com>**
Sent: Saturday, August 26, 2017 6:51 AM
To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>
Subject: Abolishing submission wages for people with disabilities

Karina,

I read the article in today's Seattle Times about eliminating lower pay for people with disabilities. I have a son with autism who is 16 1/2. While this potential change currently does not affect him it soon will.

Please make sure the city council fully understands how this impact effects federal aid to these people before making this change. I fully agree with the perspective of the Northwest Center and the Wicklanders in the article. If you raise the minimum wage, you force families to have their disabled family members work fewer hours to stay under the eligibility income for federal support. This means more time at home and less time in the community for these workers - this would be tragic.

While what you are considering may be well intentioned it will result in very negative consequences. Please do not move forward with this change.

Thanks.

Matt Gordon

- 4. From: bobstevens@gallatinassociates.com <bobstevens@gallatinassociates.com>**
Sent: Saturday, August 26, 2017 7:59 AM
To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>
Subject: Subminimum wages for people with disabilities

We have a family friend who has been in this program for over 20 years. It has been essential to his achieving a near normal quality of life. His self-esteem and pride in his work are a pleasure to see and he has achieved a level of independence which would otherwise not be possible. I believe the various employers that he has had over the years were motivating far more by a sense of compassion than any desire for cheap labor.



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Sadly, the unintended consequences of this proposed change will do more harm than good by reducing work opportunities and jeopardizing his eligibility for benefits.

This is just another sad example of Seattle political symbolism taking precedent over reality. I urge the Mayor and Council to abandon this potentially very damaging measure.

Sincerely,

Bob Stevens
1950 Alaskan Way #326
Seattle 98101

5. From: Byron Rickert <bbrickert@gmail.com>

Sent: Saturday, August 26, 2017 8:05 AM
To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>
Subject: Disability wage

As a parent of a person with Down's I urge you not to change rules for allowing certificates for working at less than minimum wage for disabled workers. Opportunity for employment is limited and to require employers to raise wages will reduce work schedules. Pay is not important as the gains from having a job for far outweigh the financial gain. Losing the job would be disastrous to the mental physical health of workers such as my son.

Byron Rickert
360-560-2244

6. From: Joyce and Richard <rrentel@msn.com>

Sent: Saturday, August 26, 2017 8:20 AM
To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>
Subject: lower pay/disabled

Good Morning, please continue to allow sub-minimum wages (special certificates) for select people with disabilities.

Thank you, Richard Rentel

7. From: hbrannon45@aol.com <hbrannon45@aol.com>

Sent: Saturday, August 26, 2017 10:32 AM
To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>
Subject: Disabled wages

Please, leave the minimum wage for the disabled as is. I have seen these workers in action and their employment is/should be considered a charitable donation by the employers.

With only eight people affected in Seattle this is a reflection of obsession not fairness.

Ms. Herbold, et.al, need to exercise restraint instead of ideology.

Hugh Brannon

8. From: Carolyn Madsen <madsenc1948@gmail.com>

Sent: Saturday, August 26, 2017 10:46 AM



Because We Care – Beyond Inclusion Seattle, WA

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>
Subject: Subminimum Wages for People with Disabilities

Dear Karina: The effort to end subminimum wages for people with disabilities is short-sighted and ill informed. I speak from experience.

People with disabilities, depending upon their income and functional abilities, qualify for a number of means tested benefits (State and Federal cash benefits, Medicaid, food stamps, reduced bus fare, and housing assistance) that they will lose if their income is too high.

I have two children with disabilities:

- The older is on SSI, Medicaid, food stamps, qualifies for reduced bus fare, and lives in subsidized housing. He works part-time at a low (less than \$15/hour) but not subminimum wage. It is a balancing act to keep his work hours at a level that does not jeopardize his other benefits. When his income goes up, his Federal cash benefits, food stamps, bus fare, and housing assistance go down. There was a point at which his income went up so “high” that he lost food stamps and had his subsidized rent increased. That left him more impoverished than he was before his income was increased. We worked with him to reduce his work hours to a level that allows him to work part-time and maintain all of his benefits;
- Our other child, while also disabled and only able to work part-time, makes a little too much money to qualify for any benefits. She works for \$15/hour which we thought was wonderful, until we realized that her level of income disqualifies her from the range of benefits that her brother enjoys. Her brother, who makes less money per month than she does, has more spendable income due to the other benefits he receives.

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The people who think that subminimum wages for people with disabilities is discriminatory, do not understand how disability benefits work. Earning a higher wage can reduce the disability benefits for which a person with disabilities qualifies and fundamentally reduce their quality of life.

Carolyn Madsen

- 9. From: Cindie Brown <midwifeseattle@gmail.com>**
Sent: Saturday, August 26, 2017 11:07 AM
To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>
Cc: Steve Brown <sbrown@seaprep.org>
Subject: Comments about abolishing subminimum wages

Dear Karina,

Thank you for this opportunity to give feedback regarding the proposed ban on paying disabled workers in Seattle less than minimum wage.



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I felt deeply concerned this morning when I read the article on this topic in the Seattle Times. I believe the proponents of this ban have good intentions for justice but are naive about the needs of many people with disabilities. I believe the ban would do more harm than good.

I am the mother of a 21-year-old young adult with Down syndrome. My son, Andrew, takes much satisfaction in a task well-accomplished (like dumping the recycling), a sense of independence (like using the library without my presence) and loving community relationships (such as he has experienced in the past through his vocational training programs). He also has a hard time maintaining focus and understanding complex directions. Anyone working with Andrew knows that he will need special accommodations in his work place. He will need careful and simple communication, extra patience and supportive relationship with his supervisor. I know that his presence in the workplace is mutually beneficial, but the rewards are not particularly financial. In fact, Andrew's working presence will likely *not* be financially advantageous for his employer, *especially* if the employer is required to pay minimum wage. I believe implementing such a requirement for employers will be a deterrent to finding good job placements for Andrew and make it harder for open-hearted employers to support people with disabilities. The result of this would be less community involvement for Andrew and less sense of purpose.

Also, it seems the supporters of the ban believe that value of employment for my son would be primarily financial. This could not be further from the truth. Andrew has no appreciation of the value of money. He still believes, despite many attentive efforts to teach otherwise, that 3 pennies is worth more than 1 quarter, and that 75 cents in change is worth more than a 5-dollar bill. The value of money for Andrew is the independence he feels when he can purchase his own ice-cream sandwich, but he has no concept of his life-sustaining financial needs. For those, he is dependent upon his parents, who are also his guardians. To increase his income at work would decrease his access to other financial assistance that have maximum-income limits, all the while not increasing his personal sense of value one bit.

I believe I speak for many families who support members with disabilities. The city would be doing us a great disservice by increasing wage requirements for employers.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,
Cindie Brown

10. From: ERIKA LIM <erika.lim@msn.com>

Sent: Saturday, August 26, 2017 1:48 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: Re: subminimum wages for persons with disabilities

Dear Ms. Bull,

For persons with disabilities who receive SSI or SSD, the hourly wage doesn't matter. Their gross earnings each month--THAT is crucial. Persons who receive SSI or SSD and are engaged in "substantial



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gainful activity, which is currently defined by the Social Security Administration as \$1,170.00 per month for persons who are not blind, as \$1,950.00 per month for persons who are blind. The current maximum monthly SSI benefit is \$735.00, so the absolute maximum monthly income for an SSI recipient is \$1,905.00 before that person risks losing SSI eligibility.

SSI and SSD recipients who earn more \$1,170.00 in a month--even if they earn \$1,171.00--risk losing part or all of their SS benefit. They also risk losing assistance tied to SS eligibility: Medicaid, subsidized housing, food assistance. These benefits are worth several thousand dollars each month and are, for many, what allows them to be independent and in the community.

Receiving all these types of assistance is what distinguishes the wage debate for persons with disabilities who make less than minimum wage from what wages should be paid to persons without disabilities who must make ends meet on less, or no, assistance.

If Seattle decides to eliminate subminimum wages for persons with disabilities, the amount of money these citizens gross won't change. Rather, the number of hours they work will be reduced so that their earnings remain below the limit. No one will risk losing medical insurance, housing, and food assistance, just for a few extra dollars each month.

And please bear in mind that while some SSI and SSD recipients have family members or others who help guide them through the incredibly complicated and ever-changing maze of federal and state benefits for persons with disabilities, many do not. Those in the former category have someone who can monitor their monthly earnings and ensure they remain eligible for all benefits, while those in the second category do not, and can easily go over income and have to repay, or--worse--lose the benefit. I see this happen every day. The law doesn't require intent to defraud, nor does having a disability excuse an overpayment or reinstate a benefit.

Erika Lim
Eastlake 98102
206-650-3818

11. From: Sally Puff <spuff@comcast.net>
Sent: Saturday, August 26, 2017 4:22 PM
To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>
Subject: Pay for people with disabilities

Dear Ms Bull,

I have an adult child with disabilities. My non-verbal disabled daughter is now 60 years old and "retired," but for about a half dozen years she was employed at a sub-minimum wage doing a task that she very much enjoyed in a supported work situation. There is so much dignity associated with being employed, regardless of the wage. Please consider allowing some workers to work and less than minimum wage. Please take the recommendations of professionals in disabilities fields.

Sally Puff



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12. From: vancil1@comcast.net <vancil1@comcast.net>

Sent: Saturday, August 26, 2017 6:26 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: The proposal to abolish subminimum wages for people with disabilities - COS experience

Hello Karina - I am a supervisor in Traffic Control in the Transportation Operations section of SDOT, and I have an opinion based on my experience supervising Karen Fieser, who is one of our Special Support staff. Karen was born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, and is not very intelligent, requiring a fixed routine with a lot of assistance and support, but we love having her for many years now, as she is good with and loves doing very dull tasks (copying, scanning, filing, ordering, stocking) that would bore the pants off an intern. Her job coach and I have gone through not once but twice this re-calculation of her salary to maintain her benefits. She would lose those benefits if she cut her part time hours, she does not want to cut her hours, but she would have difficulty with a full-time schedule. Although she loves her job, she does require more than most in performing it. I know passing this would hurt her, and others. If you would like to talk to me as one of the City supervisors, my work number is 684-5111. I felt strongly enough about this to comment from home, after reading it in the Seattle Times.

Marilyn Vancil

marilyn.vancil@seattle.gov

Traffic Control Supervisor

SDOT

13. From: [Barbara Hansen](mailto:barbscall@gmail.com) <barbscall@gmail.com>

Sent: Saturday, August 26, 2017 9:02 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: Ending Lower pay

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Karina,

I am not sure if my comments will be counted as I am no longer a resident of Seattle, but having been born and raised there I feel it is my home town. I live in Port Townsend now and we had a similar program to what is offered at Northwest Center. The program was called Skookum and it ended once the program was required to pay standard wages. I believe this is more complex than proponents of the ban realize. I understand that it seems discriminatory, but there are factors to consider. Although I now have a Master's Degree and work as a Mental Health Counselor, I was on public assistance for more than a decade while raising my children. I wanted to go to work, but the increased income would not have been enough to pay bills yet was too much to keep my subsidized rent down housing and would have caused me to lose my food stamps and medical. I could have used the experience of being among others in the workforce and it would have been a big boost to my confidence. The point is that a person gets more from work than a pay check. Work is incredibly important to psychological well-being in terms of place and belonging. As a business owner it is hard to imagine a business being able to justify paying someone the same wage who is doing half the work. It would simply be charity. I think a solution would be to re-frame the employment as some sort of educational or apprenticeship experience. Another thought is to subsidize the wages. Although I am not sure how that would happen, I think the disabled workers are going to be the big losers in all this if the ban goes through. It would be nice to see people thinking outside the box on this one rather than taking a broad-brush



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approach and trying to make something complex into something simple. I think it is important to listen to those who would be affected, especially the parents of these individuals. For what it is worth these are my thoughts on the matter.

Barbara Hansen, LMHC

home: (206) 784-6371

work: (206) 441-1121

fax: (206) 405-2825

email: AVanKampen@VKClaw.com

14. From: Linda Humphrey <lahdeedah@aol.com>

Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2017 7:24 AM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: Sub minimum wages for DD workers

My son has Down Syndrome and has been working at the NWC for most of his adult life. His job there has been a life saver. It has given him a place to go, an identity and personal esteem. With the federal mandate to close these prevocational workplaces, he will be forced into the community. Because of his limitations, finding work in the community is nearly impossible. If employers are disallowed from offering sub minimum wages to adults like my son, he will basically become unemployable. We are not at all concerned about the pay. In fact, we would almost pay an employer to take him in. Without a job of any kind he will be forced to remain at home, watching television, withdrawn from opportunities to socialize, feel useful and build self-esteem. This is not a one-size-fits-all situation. If employers are required to pay minimum wage, too many DD people like my son will end up with no job, no life, no hope.

Linda Humphrey
206-526-5599

15. From: DR BERNARD J ZELDOW <bzeldow@msn.com>

Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2017 3:34 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: ENDING LOWER PAY

Unless you have someone in your family with a disability, you truly have no idea how important it is to have them employed. If they are required to get the minimum wage, why would an employer hire them instead of someone without a handicap. There is no incentive. As is, there are insufficient jobs for the disabled. Anyway, I can help in this decision making, please feel free to contact me. I have a disabled son. Dr. Bernard J. Zeldow, 425-4534-5181 or bzeldow@msn.com

16. From: Kathy Wickward <wickward@comcast.net>

Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2017 3:37 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: Ending sub minimum wage for the disabled

Dear Ms. Bull,



Because We Care – Beyond Inclusion Seattle, WA

Hello, my name is Kathy Wickward. I would like to comment on the proposal to end the practice of exempting companies from paying minimum wage through the use of special certificates so that they may hire people with disabilities who would ordinarily be unable to find work.

I am speaking from 3 viewpoints. For 9 years I was a mental health case manager. I am now an administrator at a church where we hired a young developmentally disabled person. I am also the parent to a young woman who is autistic, and who was recently fired from her student assistant position at the Seattle Public Library. I would like to address all of these.

First, I am heartily in favor of a minimum wage that is a living wage. I believe that equal work deserves equal pay. I also understand that a system that allows a company the ability to hire at a sub minimum wage can easily be abused if safeguards are not put into place. The idea of paying a worker less than a dollar an hour is reprehensible and a clear exploitation. The idea of using a person's physical disability, who is working in a job that requires no physical work, as an excuse to pay less than minimum wage is also unacceptable.

However, if a worker is disabled to the point that they are receiving SSI, or SSDI, then they truly cannot work at the level that a non-disabled person can. In fact, when disability income is granted, it is based on the belief that a person cannot work enough to support themselves. The family of this person submitted evidence that the disabled person will be unable to get and keep a full-time job. I have submitted quite a lot of this paperwork on behalf of my mentally ill clients. Mental illness is extremely debilitating. No one wants to hire someone who is hallucinating, who wanders off intermittently, who can't communicate effectively, or who is so depressed as to be absent for much of their work time because they cannot get out of bed. As an administrator, I can tell you it is expensive to hire a disabled person. They require more supervision, at least initially. Their behavior is less predictable. They require accommodations. They are less productive than non-disabled persons. Many do not learn as quickly. They occasionally interrupt their co-workers. They cannot work as many hours, yet they require as much bureaucratic effort as a full-time worker.

I can say, too, that two things contribute to the mental health of all human beings: housing and work. Work provides a sense of purpose, dignity, and social contact that is unequaled by any other activity. The ability to earn at least some of their livelihood separates the healthy disabled from the less healthy. Workers who are able to earn some money are able to see their way out of poverty. Sometimes, magic happens, and there's a match between the worker and the job and he or she can get off disability entirely.

Of about 150 people I worked with in my 9 years in mental health, only three of my clients worked even part time.

My daughter was fired from the Seattle Public Library from a position that was initially put into place to give at-risk youth a chance. From what I understand, in the early years the student assistants' supervisors were expected to put in more supervisory time with these kids, teaching them job skills, giving them second and third chances. Now that they are not allowed to "discriminate" in hiring, they



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are allowed to hire teens with exceptional qualifications. They are no longer expected to put up with strange behavior. They can fire at will within three months. So the ironic situation is this: now that they cannot discriminate, they can discriminate. Disabled, at risk youth will always be discriminated against because they cost an organization so much more to train, thus perpetuating their disabled status and perpetuating the cost to society at large. Do we really want these kids to grow up into adults whose only activity is sitting in front of the television or computer playing video games, because their only income is from Social Security and whatever their parents can provide?

Subminimum wage certificates are a unique opportunity for the city to encourage employment in the unemployable without costing taxpayers a dime. I urge you not to scrap the program, but implement it in a way that is intentional and prevents abuse.

Feel free to call me with any questions.

Kathy Wickward
815 W. Argand St.
Seattle, WA 98119
206-390-3345

17. From: Rose Yu <rosehyu@me.com>

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2017 7:53 AM
To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>
Subject: Realistic wages for people with disabilities

Dear Ms Bull,

I am a mother and legal guardian for my 22 yo son with developmental disabilities. His job coach from Provail and I have worked hard to secure jobs for him. Currently he works 5 hours a week with 1:1 supervision from his job coach and he has been doing these jobs for more than a year. He is not as productive as other workers. Period. I believe he would have the chance of working more hours if his employers would be able to access “apprenticeship” wages. Sub minimum wages sound terrible as our loved ones are not sub-anything. However, many are less productive than other typical peers.

Please do not pass this misguided legislation. I think the intent might be good but the unintended consequences are that it will be even harder to find employment for our loved ones. I expend countless hours trying to advocate and network and coordinate his disparate schedules. I am a single mom with a teenage daughter as well and I am working full time. Please do not add to our burdens.

Sincerely,

Rose Yu
2806 S Dearborn St, 98144
206-604-2915

18. From: Gary Brose <gary.brose@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2017 8:32 AM
To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>
Subject: pay scale for disabled people



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Ms. Bull,

I am the father of a disabled daughter. She is essentially a high-functioning autistic, but at 27 years old, she lives with us and probably always will.

She recently lost her job at Amazon after 18 months of employment, due to automation. She is devastated. The only friends she had were people at work. She didn't get a lot of hours but she felt alive and part of things.

I implore you not to make changes of any kind that will reduce the chances that the disabled can get work - of **any** kind. Their mental health is far more important than the amount of money they earn. Having a chance to have social interaction and feel needed and useful is the great value here. Unless your own child is experiencing that, you don't understand how important it is to parents that their child has an opportunity to grow, work, and socialize. It is the only joy in their life. Pay levels are not important here. Creating MORE job opportunities should be the goal - not addressing pay levels.

Gary Brose
206-707-2628

19. From: Al Van Kampen <avankampen@vkclaw.com>

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2017 8:36 AM
To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>
Subject: Disabled Subminimum Wages

I do not support the elimination of the subminimum wage for disabled employees. Although this proposal may be motivated by good intentions, it will only hurt those it is intended to help. Please do not erect another barrier to providing disabled individuals employment.

Al Van Kampen
1943 NW Milford Way
Seattle, Washington 98177

20. From: Wheeler, Doug <DWheeler@viresorts.com>

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2017 1:28 PM
To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>
Subject: Subminimum Wages for Disabled People

I am writing in response to the article in *The Seattle Times* on August 26, 2017, regarding the proposal to abolish subminimum wages for disabled people. The article mentioned objections raised by The Northwest Center, that abolishing subminimum wages could cost disabled workers more in the long run. An example of such an unintended consequence not mentioned in the article is the potential negative effect on a disabled person who collects Social Security Disability Income. Among other things, the Social Security Administration examines the earnings of recipients of SSDI as an indication of whether the recipient continues to suffer from a disability. As a practical matter, this imposes a cap on how much a disabled person can earn and still receive SSDI. Exceeding that cap can result in the disabled person losing his or her SSDI payments, and it is an all or nothing proposition. If the disabled person earns too much, SSA deems the person to no longer be disabled, all SSDI payments end, and



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SSA may demand repayment of SSDI payments received by the disable person after he or she is deemed to no longer be disabled due to earnings.

I have a brother who was born mentally retarded (to use a term that may no longer be considered politically correct, but which fits him – for reasons we never figured out, my brother who is now in his 60s only has the mental capability of about a 10-year-old). Due to his condition, he qualifies for SSDI payments, which enable him to live quasi-independently. If he lost his SSDI income, it would be catastrophic.

My brother loves airplanes, and for several years, he happily worked at Sea-Tac cleaning the insides of airplanes. Although mentally deficient in many respects, he is very trainable and diligently did a thorough job. He rode the bus from NE Seattle to Sea-Tac, where he worked a few hours a day, and his employer did everything it could to accommodate the constraints imposed by his disability. However, he sometimes worked “too many” hours, which caused him to make more than a “cap” imposed by the Social Security Administration. Notwithstanding the fact that my brother was born with his mental retardation, on two occasions in about 10 years, we received notices from SSA that my brother’s earnings indicated that he was no longer disabled, that his SSDI payments were being terminated, and that he would be required to repay all SSDI payments that he received after he exceeded the cap.

On both occasions, we were able to successfully petition SSA to reconsider its determination and reinstate his SSDI eligibility (although the last petition required the intervention of Senator Cantwell). However, SSA’s cap forced us to continually monitor my brother’s work schedule to make sure that his earnings would not exceed the cap. As his hourly wage increased over time, he was unable to work as many hours in order to stay under the cap. Although his employer cooperated with us in restricting his work schedule, he finally started making so much per hour that it was no longer worth all the time he spent on the bus getting to and from work. We were reluctant to have him quit that job – it got him out of the house and gave him something to do, it allowed him to earn a little extra money, and he loved going to the airport. We even asked his employer whether he could work more hours but be paid less. However, his employer said it could not reduce his hourly rate. As a result, we very reluctantly give notice, which was a very sad day for my brother (not to mention the loss of income).

Not long after that, we were forced to move my brother out of an apartment where he had lived for over 15 years and into a group home in Olympia. While a number of matters factored into that decision, a large part of it was his loss of income from being no longer able to work at Sea-Tac. We simply could no longer afford for him to continue to live in Seattle.

As my brother’s story indicates, proposals such as ending subminimum wages for disabled people may be entirely well-intentioned but may have negative impacts on the people supposedly benefited. I am sure that SSA views its limits on income as being necessary and appropriate to prevent fraud and abuse of the SSDI program, but those rules had a very negative impact on my brother. A one-size-fits-all rule for disabled people ignores the differing circumstances of the disabled and I have no doubt that disabled people in Seattle will be hurt if this proposal is adopted.



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Thank you,

Doug Wheeler

3026 Beacon Ave. S, Apt.402
Seattle, WA 98144-5857
(206) 356-8350
DWheeler@viresorts.com

21. From: elbrooml@aol.com <elbrooml@aol.com>

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2017 9:07 AM
To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>
Cc: elbrooml@aol.com
Subject: comments on higher wages

Karina Bull
Seattle Office of Labor Standards
810 Third Ave., Suite 375
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Ms. Bull,

The Seattle Times published an article about paying disabled workers the same as able-bodied workers. The article states that with the increase pay for disabled people, work-sites such as Northwest Center would have to close.

My brother, James B. Broomell, is disabled and has worked at Northwest Center for over 40 years. He began work there when it was in downtown Seattle and now works at their location in Renton. My brother is mentally retarded, has cerebral palsy, is deaf, is blind in one eye and has arthritis in his hands and knees. Northwest Center has been his life for all of his adult life. He loves working there, loves his coworkers, and loves his supervisors. It is his community. He feels safe and productive there. No one makes fun of him there because they all have their own problems. Yes, he gets a small paycheck, and he is happy with every one he receives. He gets excited when some months he makes \$5 or \$10 more, but doesn't get sad when the paychecks are less. He loves the work and he loves going to work. After the week off at Christmas, he can't wait to go back to work.

He lives in a group home and gets assistance from the State. If he made more money he would not qualify for assistance. On both levels your plan would ruin his life.

If you close Northwest Center because they don't pay high wages, he would get to sit in his room at his group home with nothing to do until he dies. If you find him a job with higher wages, he would be kicked out of the group home. I guess you would want him to move in with his 92-year-old mother because he would not be able to shop, do laundry, and cook meals for himself. His other sister and I don't live in Seattle with all the do-gooders to find him a job he could do or with the Access Bus to get him to a job, so if we took him in, where would he work?



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I use the term do-gooders loosely. They are people who don't know handicapped people, haven't lived with them, and can't effectively communicate with them. There are able handicapped...but there are truly DIS-abled handicapped people too. They need a place like Northwest Center.

If you want to sort the handicapped and select the able-handicapped for other work, do it. But to take away my brother's life because he is a disabled handicapped person is wrong.

Or maybe you could hire him. Maybe to greet folks who visit your office? Provide an Access Bus and he will be there. He can't answer the phone, people won't understand him when he speaks to them, he doesn't read many words but can read some, he can write some words but with the cerebral palsy and arthritis it is getting more difficult. Or he could just sit at the front desk with his walker and smile. Did I already say that the spasticity in his body causes him to grind his teeth so most of his teeth are gone now...but he does smile a lot.

Please be smart when making decisions about the disabled people at Northwest Center and throughout Seattle. If people are happy about their situation, why change it? I grew up with my brother and I know he knows he is different. He wanted to drive and ski like my sister and I did, but knew he couldn't. He knows he is different and he knows that he is fulfilled with the jobs he is assigned at Northwest Center.

Thanks for considering my plea to keep Northwest Center open with the wages they currently pay.

Sincerely,

E. L. Broomell
PO Box 996
Rochester, WA 98579
elbrooml@aol.com

22. From: Cindy Pace <cindypace1957@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2017 11:15 AM
To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>
Subject: Subminimum wages for People with Disabilities

Hello,

I am the legal guardian for a person with developmental disabilities. He is struggling to maintain his 6 hour/week job in Seattle. I am so glad to learn through the Seattle Times that a certificate to pay less than minimum wage is currently an option, since the employer is unable to provide job accommodations even though we (guardians) have offered to share the cost.

Concerning the proposal to eliminate the certificate, I wonder if the range of disability is critical to the discussion. If an individual has a legal guardian for either financial or personal decisions, they might benefit less from the minimum wage protection than from more job supports or daily living



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assistance. A few dollars more per hour cannot begin to pay for a job coach being present and charging \$70/ per hour (the standard rate).

Please do not eliminate the certificate to pay SOME individuals with disabilities a wage that allows them to work.

Thank you,
Cynthia Pace
7052 Dibble Ave. NW
Seattle, WA 98117

23. From: Cheryl Felak [mailto:CHERYLFELAK@msn.com]

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2017 8:47 PM
To: Karina.bull@seattle.gov
Subject: Certificate 14(c) - sub-minimum wage

Dear Ms. Bull,

I am writing as a concerned advocate for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I am also the guardian of a young man who has worked under the 14 (c) certificate for several years. He currently does have a job at a local home improvement store and earns a bit more than minimum wage - but he is only able to work 9 hours per week. While he earns more than minimum wage, he requires 1:1 employment support for which King County pays the vendor about \$2500 per month.

I understand that the Seattle Commission for People with disAbilities has recommended that these certificates be eliminated. Removing this choice also then removes the choice of having any type of employment for some of these individuals. They state that the law is discrimination and that people are being exploited by not paying a fair wage.

According to the "Bottom Dollar" documentary produced in part by Disability Rights Washington and Rooted in Rights, employers must use a time/productivity study to calculate what a non-disabled person could accomplish and then use that to figure the wage for the disabled employee working under this certificate. If the standard would be producing 10 items an hour and the disabled person produced 5 items, that person would receive the pay for those 5 items. Discrimination comes into play when a non-disabled person at the same place of employment produces 5 items and gets paid for 10 items - only due to the fact that this person is protected by the minimum wage law. If this was the case, I'm sure most employers would fire that non-disabled person due to low productivity but the certificate provides protection for the disabled employee.

Also, as stated in the documentary, "If people are given the proper services and supports and proper assistive technology, the sky is the limit for many, many individuals" It also takes funds to provide that support and given the situation I would really question if those funds for employment support would magically appear if the certificates were eliminated.



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It really does help to have a creative and knowledgeable job coach/vendor to assist with matching skill sets to a job. I would imagine that most of those people who have a job under this certificate would need 1:1 employment support or close to it for a job that paid minimum wage. Employment support is also expensive which then reduces the number of hours that the person would be able to work. Reality and ideology are two different things.

People who work under these certificates (and/or their guardians) are aware that they are making less than minimum wage and sign a consent that they agree to work for that wage.

Another issue of concern is the extremely rude and derogatory responses that I have received from one of the commissioners when I expressed concern regarding the elimination of these certificates. The responses are also ones which deny me the legal and court appointed job of speaking for and advocating for my son - refusing to listen to what I say on behalf of my son because I'm not the disabled person. I have been told by more than one person that since I am not disabled, I cannot speak for my son who is - totally ignoring the court appointed and legal responsibility that I have. These people do not know my son, do not understand his unique set of skills and/or limitations and are not intellectually and developmentally disabled. Many of the commissioners have advanced college degrees - my son was not even able to graduate from high school.

When advocating for and with a population it is important to work with that population. The Seattle Commission for People with disAbilities seems to forget that the population that identifies as "disabled" is extremely heterogeneous and when advocating for issues that affect a certain segment of that population it is critical to work with them - not against them.

Thank you,

Cheryl

Cheryl Felak, RN, BSN

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Seattle, WA

www.becausewecare1.com

24. From: Saskia Davis <ddexchanges@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2017 8:18 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Cc: Saskia Davis <ddexchanges@gmail.com>

Subject: sub minimum wage certificates

Dear Ms. Bull:

From the Seattle Times, I understand the Seattle City Council is considering outlawing certificates that allow businesses to pay below minimum wage to some workers.



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Ideally, the measure would be amended to restructure the certificate program to accommodate the very broad range of needs the certificate was originally intended to accommodate. However, if, as I understand it, a yay or nay vote is to be held, I respectfully register my vote against it. Some people with profound intellectual developmental disabilities need this dispensation. They need the activity that work provides as well as the small income they can earn doing the work. If you outlaw the certificates, there is a good chance that the employers will no longer be able to afford to employ them.

Many have already suffered great loss because of the closure of sheltered workshops where their slow or erratic work paces were accepted as the norm.

I understand that there are higher functioning disabled people who feel disrespected and exploited by menial work at less than minimum wage that is permitted by the certificates. They are at the other end of the disability spectrum from my sister, whose early developmental mental age would mean she would be left sitting home every day if her job were precluded by this measure. For those with higher performance abilities, the certificates should be replaced by a different system. But outlawing the certificates would be a terrible loss to my sister and others of similarly limited capacity.

Those who call the low wages discriminatory are not considering how discriminatory their push to outlaw them is. They are not considering how discriminatory it would be to render impossible employment of people less able than themselves.

The world of people with disabilities within a society originally structured by non-disabled people for the benefit of non-disabled people and for businesses, which must be profitable, is one fraught with difficulties. Unfortunately, too often, those with lesser disabilities are pitted against those with greater disabilities. Since people with profound and severe intellectual developmental disabilities are fewer in number and are largely non-verbal, it is harder for them to defend themselves, but they are not less important.

The Seattle Commission for People with disAbilities seems to be behind the effort to foreclose the use of certificates. This group is not at all concerned about the needs for employment by people with severe and profound intellectual developmental disabilities.

Please help us counterbalance the commission's lack of concern for less fortunate people with greater disabilities.

Thank you for your service.

Saskia

Saskia Davis, RNB, Fircrest Family Guardian
206 364 7762

25. Joan M. Broomell

319 South Mary Avenue
East Wenatchee, WA 98802
Home: 509-886-3773



BECAUSEWECARE1.COM

Because We Care – Beyond Inclusion Seattle, WA

Cell: 509-669-0068

August 30, 2017

Ms. Karina Bull:

I recently received the Seattle Times article on the \$15.00 an hour wage increase proposal to salaries for the Seattle area disabled workers including those at Northwest Center. I am strongly opposed to that plan.

My brother has been working at Northwest Center for decades. He was born with cerebral palsy, mental retardation, and is deaf and has trouble talking. As he's aged, his CP has progressed so that he now needs a walker and his hands are not very functional. Over the past decade he has lost sight in one eye and most of his teeth are gone. He is not able to take on any normal job in the workforce.

My brother lives in a group home, a single room which is perfect for his needs. He is given meals and his cleaning and personal needs are overseen by the staff. Besides his little room, his job at NWC is what keeps him going. It is focus and his world revolves around his "work." At his home, he stays mostly to himself so NWC is also his social life and he looks forwards to picnics and family events put on by NWC for their clients. His co-workers and supervisors are like family to him.

The proposal to raise his subminimum wage to \$15.00 would be a disaster to his ability to continue working at NWC. A change to his salary would mean he would no longer be able to work as the increase would jeopardize his Social Security and Medicaid benefits. In other words, your wage increase will put my brother out of job. The work at NWC is the only thing he can do.

While I understand that some of the subminimum wage recipients may deserve and could use the salary increase, it would be a waste to pay my brother a higher wage. He has everything he needs including a nice home that suits his needs perfectly. He doesn't need the money. What he does need is his work; his job that he loves so much. This salary increase proposal would take that away from him.

I strongly encourage you to MAINTAIN and not abolish the subminimum wage for people with disabilities.

Sincerely,

Joan M. Broomell

26. From: jamessandywalker@cs.com <jamessandywalker@cs.com>

Sent: Thursday, August 31, 2017 8:17 AM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: Seattle's push to end lower pay for workers with disabilities: Would it help or hurt?

Dear Ms. Bull,



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I recently read the article regarding the push to end the subminimum wage for people with disabilities. I want to make this concise, so let me be clear up front that I believe this would have a very negative effect on both of my daughters with developmental disabilities, and especially my older daughter with very high needs. The net effect would be to give more working hours to the highly capable at a higher wage, and take away many, many hours and jobs from those less capable who do not do work that matches what their typically developing peers are able to do.

I am also frustrated by the ability of groups such as the Commission for people with DisAbilities to make these decisions and thus affect the larger community without any input from the community for which they are supposedly advocating. I am a member of a very large group of individuals who all have family members with disabilities, and not one of us had ever even heard of this Commission. Now they are pushing for legislation that will have a very negative effect on the community they say they are supporting, and no one has talked to that community. I don't even believe there is anyone on the commission that represents our community.

It is always those who are most needy that are adversely affected by all the "politically correct" rules and regulations that are being enacted in our State. My daughter does not have a way to advocate for herself, and frequently when I try to speak to her needs I am shouted down by those with power and megaphones.

Please don't allow the Commission for people with DisAbilities to operate in this vacuum any longer.

Sandra Walker

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27. From: Gene Boes <gboes@nwcenter.org>

Sent: Monday, September 4, 2017 10:20 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Cc: Executive Team <ExecutiveTeam@nwcenter.org>

Subject: Seattle - Subminimum Wage

Dear Ms. Bull,

I am writing to you regarding the proposed revision to a Seattle ordinance exception related to subminimum wage.

Northwest Center was founded and continues to operate under the belief that everyone deserves opportunity to participate and be included in society. No one will be turned away based on their disability, no matter how profoundly impacted. Our founding mothers created schools and legislation to protect the rights of these individuals and ensure their inclusion into society. We have carried their spirit and work forward for the last 50 years and will continue in the same vein.

Northwest Center listened to the families. We listened to the individuals in our program that found their community and their purpose within Northwest Center. As with all our services, Northwest Center focuses on what is best for the individual and our goal is always inclusion and participation in



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society to the best of the ability of the individual we serve. In cases where someone can and is willing to move into the community we wholeheartedly support their path and provide many services to make the transition a successful one. We offer placement services, vocational training, job coaching and job carving where it makes sense to the employer and the individual.

Subminimum wage exceptions are associated with two different programs funded by the federal government and allocated by King County and DSHS. NWC has continued to operate these two programs over the last 30+ years for individuals/guardians who choose them as the best option for their family. Many times, we find individuals that cannot or are unwilling to move out of our subminimum wage Services. For these individuals, we offer a place for them to be part of society, obtain a sense of purpose and gain skills appropriate to them. This approach is not only supported by the individuals in our program but by their families and care systems.

Northwest Center uses subminimum wage with integrity. We do not use the subminimum wage exception to put money in our pockets. Our clients receiving subminimum wages are trainees whose productivity, quality, consistency, and reliability fall significantly below minimum standards required of a minimum wage employee. We don't expect trainees to work for free, but we can't afford to pay for work that isn't done, no employer can.

In 2017, we have served over 400 adults in our employment service offerings via our Seattle, Spokane and Omak offices. Today only 73 individuals of that number are making subminimum wage. It is the clients, parent or guardians' choice that these individuals remain in a service earning subminimum wage. Each client loves what he or she does and is part of the local community. It is not exclusively about the money as all clients in this service have earning restrictions due to their Medicaid benefits. During the year, Northwest Center meets with these clients and works to find a pathway to move them forward into employment or services of their choices.

While we do not take on new clients in our subminimum wage service offerings, we refuse to abandon those that find a sense of purpose and community in the services we offer.

I would also like to emphasize that these stories and media coverage (by well-meaning people) that overly focus on "subminimum wages" often misses the point - that there is a tragic lack of opportunities for people with significant developmental disabilities. For Northwest Center, this is all about creating space for ALL people of ALL abilities. Currently, there is a lack of services and employers who are able and/or willing to take on employees who have significant disabilities. But that through NWC efforts, and with coordination of individuals served, families, case workers, care givers, etc., these individuals have a way to contribute and to be part of their community beyond the four walls of a group home or institution. These individuals don't depend on these wages to live, they depend on them to contribute, to participate, to make connections with others, to show achievement and be part of the community.



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Inclusion is not a compromise, and it means a lot more than just a paycheck. It means enjoying the everyday privileges most of us take for granted. Driving to work, going to school, having friends at work, being in the community.

I hope that any long-term solution includes the full rights for the individuals served by NWC and similar organizations.

Respectfully,
Gene Boes

Gene Boes | President & CEO

[Northwest Center](#)

7272 W Marginal Way S, Seattle, WA 98108

Office 206.378.6340 | Cell 425.830.5773

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28. From: O.J Humphrey III <ojh3@yahoo.com>

Sent: Tuesday, September 5, 2017 5:29 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>; Sawant, Kshama <Kshama.Sawant@seattle.gov>; Burgess, Tim <Tim.Burgess@seattle.gov>; Gonzalez, Lorena <Lorena.Gonzalez@seattle.gov>

Cc: emiller@nwcenter.org; John Whipple <jwhipple@nwcenter.org>

Subject: Proposed City Ordinance to eliminate subminimum wage for developmentally disabled workers

To my district and City-wide council representatives and to the Seattle Office of Labor Standards,

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As a lifelong City resident, a supporter of the already enacted minimum wage ordinance, and the father of a very long time Northwest Center subminimum wage employee, be careful of the well-intentioned but misguided move to make illegal, subminimum wages for workers who are and can be certified to be developmentally disabled and unemployable at a market rate of compensation. It is compassionate, not discriminatory, to recognize the limitations of employment opportunities for the handicapped worker in the mainstream economy and to provide subminimum pay employment in a sheltered environment.

The unintended consequence of your proposed ordinance will be to end the employment of a significant number of handicapped workers for whom their work and social interaction at their jobsite are an important part of their lives. It is totally naive and unrealistic to think that mainstream employers are going to hire a significantly handicapped worker at a pay rate unjustified from a productivity and business standpoint.

I would be happy to talk with any or all of you directly on this very important subject.

O. J. Humphrey III
500 Hillside Dr E
Seattle, WA 98112



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29. From: Debra Srebnik <debras98@frontier.com>

Sent: Tuesday, September 5, 2017 7:20 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>; "lisa.herbold@seattle.gov; bruce.harrell@seattle.gov; kshama.sawant@seattle.gov; rob.johnson@seattle.gov; debora.juarez@seattle.gov; mike.brien@seattle.gov; sally.bagshaw"@seattle.gov
Subject: subminimum wage exemption

Hello Karin -

I just learned that Seattle is considering the issue of subminimum wage exemptions within its minimum wage rules. First, I would like to say that I am a supporter of having a minimum wage that is truly a living wage. That said, I also believe in exemptions to minimum wage laws in the case of people with severe disabilities. My brother has severe developmental disabilities and has been a member of Northwest Center for many years. Our father was one of its founders. It's very important to our family - and many other families of individuals with disabilities - that there be an option for subminimum wage work. It's my belief that all people should have options for participating as workers in society at the level of their abilities. My brother has worked in both group supported employment - and in pre-vocational services and has benefited greatly from both. He is 57 now and has worked in this type of environment for all of this adult life... sometimes in fully sheltered environments and sometimes in the community in supported group settings. Unfortunately, he will never be able to work fully independently. And even if he was provided a job in which he could work largely independently, his pace of work is not nearly that of someone without disabilities. Businesses that contract with the Center would not be able to pay minimum wage for the level of work that my brother - and those like him - provide. But individuals like my brother do not depend upon wages to live -- work is not about just pay for them. It's about structure to the day and having a sense of value and belonging, purpose, and community.

I hope that in your deliberations you ensure that specialty programs such as those administered by Northwest Center are not jeopardized under Seattle's minimum wage law.

Thank you very much.

Debra Srebnik
206-853-2607

30. From: Mary Ann Baker <bakerlama@comcast.net>

Sent: Wednesday, September 6, 2017 1:45 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>
Subject: Subminimum Wage

Dear Ms. Bull,

Please do not support taking away subminimum wage for individuals with developmental disabilities. Some people that work in prevocational programs depend on this particular type of work. If it were to go away, many individuals would suffer as they are not able to be employed in



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regular supported employment. Their work gives them an opportunity to be successful in a supportive environment that is not readily available. Trained job coaches that work with them ensure that they are successful. For many this is what gives them meaning to their life, as well as the ability to go to a workplace and interact with people. Please do not let this opportunity for them go away. Our daughter works at an adult training program and it has taken a lot of time and effort for her to be successful. We do not want this to be unavailable to her. Prior to this, there was not employment that would match her needs in the community. Do not jeopardize their workplace.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Mary Ann Baker

31. From: VERONICA MAIER <vamaier@msn.com>

Sent: Wednesday, September 6, 2017 2:02 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: Subminimum wages

I am writing to voice my support for Northwest Center and their use of the subminimum wage services. I am the parent/guardian of a special needs adult whose employment is supported by NWC and has been for 20+ years.

While my son enjoys a "near" minimum wage for Seattle, it is his job, co-workers, friends and supportive job coach that give him the most fulfillment. He truly does not understand the monetary value of his wage. I have faith that NWC will continue to use the subminimum wage exception with integrity and want this service to continue for those individuals and families who choose it.

Most sincerely,
Veronica Maier

32. From: Elaine Ike <elaineike@hotmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, September 6, 2017 2:22 PM

To: Herbold, Lisa <Lisa.Herbold@seattle.gov>; Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Cc: emiller@nwcenter.org

Subject: Northwest Center and Subminimum Wage Issue

Dear Councilmember Herbold and Ms. Karina Bull:

Since my sister's death in 2007, I have been helping my developmentally disabled niece maintain her quality of life in terms of housing, work-life and social life. With the help of job coach support from the Northwest Center, she remained employed at Value Village for 7 years until it closed the Capitol Hill location in November of 2015. In 2016 she regained stable employment working as a porter cleaning break-rooms for a nationally known firm's technology center. Through the support of her job coaches through the years, Gigi learned professional behavior and how to initiate friendships with her fellow-



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workers. Additional counseling allowed her to develop coping mechanisms for her anxiety in "doing the right thing" while working part-time. For the first time in her life, in middle age she has work, friendships, and independent housing. However, many of her benefits such as health care, housing and Social Security Disability are programs keyed to the Federal Minimum Wage, which is \$7.25 per hour and affects calculation of services for the disabled: Federally supported housing programs are based on that minimum wage, even though the local Seattle housing is now so well above national housing costs. Social Security Disability eligibility is also based on the \$7.25 minimum wage, so even part-time wages of \$15 per hour can make a person ineligible for this necessary support. When Seattle adopted the \$15.00 minimum wage, I don't believe there was adequate understanding of how this would affect the most vulnerable among our citizens.

Thankfully, we have the support of the Northwest Center, the Division of Developmental Disabilities and Seattle Housing Programs that all understand key issues of the developmentally disabled worker. Currently, the Northwest Center is serving only 73 individuals in Seattle, Spokane, and Omak offices at subminimum wages that give them the life-affirming chance to work and earn a wage without losing the benefits that sustain all the other needs of life -- Social Security, Housing and Health Care. These are the most vulnerable of the developmentally disabled! Thankfully, my niece is higher functioning and able to thread through the edge of "normal life" on the current minimum wage of \$15 per hour, but she couldn't do that without help from the Northwest Center and other agencies that continue to support her (and that \$15 per hour may eventually bar her from some of those services).

I believe the recent article published in the Seattle Times that says Seattle will move to end the Subminimum wage exemption will lead to the end of employment for those 73 individuals. I also think that a better understanding of how the intersection of federal rules and state and high local wages may lead to negative consequences for the most vulnerable of developmentally disabled workers. Please contact me if I can be of further assistance on this issue.

Sincerely,

Elaine Ike, Caregiver of Developmentally Disabled Adult

33. From: Elizabeth Sims <lizoscar@comcast.net>

Sent: Wednesday, September 6, 2017 4:53 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: sub minimum wage for people with disabilities

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed change eliminating the sub minimum wage. This is indeed a civil rights issue, but I ask you.....whose rights? to what? To meaningful activities or to more sitting around at home? It is more complex than the well-intentioned people at the Office of Labor Standards and the Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities appear to believe (as quoted in the Seattle Times article August 26).



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My 32-year-old son has been moderately intellectually disabled since birth. I retired last year from 22 years of teaching elementary school children with learning disabilities, ADHD, and autism in the Seattle School District. In both personal and professional life, I have been dealing for many years with differing views of what “inclusion”, discrimination, “full participation” etc. mean and how people with disabilities can be part of mainstream society. The most important lesson I have learned is that “one size fits all” is wrong, wrong, wrong— and that is what this push to pay everyone minimum wage is.

The mother quoted in the article is quite right. The hardest part of life for an intellectually disabled person (and his/her family) after schooling ends is finding enough things to do to keep active, engaged, around other people, and living a satisfactory life. The federal/state requirement that all people with disabilities be in competitive paid employment if possible, and that money, policy, staffing should all be directed to that aim has created positive harm for the intellectually disabled who are not high-functioning. Mr. Bickley at the Seattle Commission is clearly one of the disabled for whom the law works well. Certainly he, and other high-functioning people, should be entitled to minimum wage just like the non-disabled. But many adults with intellectual disabilities are not like that and current policy has meant fewer job opportunities, less modification of jobs, fewer hours, and more time sitting at home alone.

I speak from personal knowledge. We followed all the rules with my son. He went through the school based post-high school transition program to age 21, signed up with an approved vendor, practiced social skills for the workplace, and tried to do the jobs his job coach found for him. They didn't last because at minimum wage, he couldn't give “value for money”. He now has a job which does indeed pay minimum wage. It has helped him thrive, and to develop independence, friendship, conversational skills, perseverance, and greater ability to cooperate. But it is two hours a week. Two hours. Or four hours, if you count the time it takes to go back and forth on the bus. It's not enough.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Sims
lizoscar@comcast.net
6300 19th Avenue N.E.
Seattle, WA 98115
206-527-6729

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The letters below were received after the deadline of September 6, 2017

34. From: Jill Vanneman <jillvanneman@q.com>

Sent: Thursday, September 7, 2017 4:23 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: unintended consequence of proposed ordinance



BECAUSEWECARE1.COM

Because We Care – Beyond Inclusion Seattle, WA

September 6, 2017

Dear Ms. Bull:

I am writing to express my dismay about abolishing subminimum wages for people with disabilities. I am in the camp of those who believe that the passage of this ordinance would bring unintended consequences and hurt more than it helps.

During the last four years I have been involved with a woman who suffers from a med-resistant form of bi-polar disorder. She suffers daily with anxiety and/or depression and her mood can fluctuate many times throughout the day. She is a 58-year-old woman who has a bachelor's and master's degree. At one point in her life she worked full time as a peer counselor for Navos, a mental health center. She is smart and articulate but because of her disability it is hard to find a job that she can do. She receives a check for \$1000 from SSI and any job she could get could only be part-time and most likely only 3 half days a week. I say this because there is a limit to how much she can earn or it jeopardizes the paltry amount she gets from the government.

Because of her anxiety she has found it is almost impossible to hold a full-time job. She has been out of work for two years after losing a part time administrative secretary job with a local church. She has been on several job interviews but they all say they have to pay her \$15 an hour and that she cannot do or she loses her stipend. Once before in her work history she went over the limit of what she could make and it took her a year of fighting with DSHS to get her stipend back. She had some savings but now because of lack of employment her funds are nearly gone and she recently had to go on food stamps.

This is a woman whose self-esteem is being crushed by the fact that she cannot find a meaningful job. Her work source job counselor has encouraged her to apply for sauna jobs. She is capable of so much more but because of the low pay and stress I presume that is why this suggestion is being offered.

All she wants is a part time job that gives her a sense of self-worth, gets her out of the house and empowers her to feel she is making a contribution to society.

On interviews she has asked if prospective employers would pay her less and of course they have had to say no.

She does not want to lose her disability which she is entitled to but enacting this ordinance would cause her further harm and impede her chances of finding gainful employment and maintaining her already weakened self-esteem.

Please consider the unintended consequences of this ordinance. It matters.

Sincerely,



Because We Care – Beyond Inclusion Seattle, WA

Jill Vanneman

35. From: Katrina Davis <katrinakdavis@yahoo.com>

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2017 2:33 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: Wages for people with developmental disabilities

Hello Ms. Bull,

I am a family advocate at Seattle Children's Autism Center. I provide case management support for hundreds of individuals and families impacted by autism.

I specialize in adult transition services and lifelong care needs.

I am also the mother of Arthur who was diagnosed with autism at age 2. Arthur is now a talented and wonderful human being on the cusp of adulthood. He has much to offer the world. In preparation for a lifetime of meaningful employment, his father and I are currently working closely with his high school transition team to build his vocation skills, find volunteer opportunities, and enhance his job readiness abilities.

Arthur is significantly impacted by autism. He has limited verbal ability, low self-care skills, requires line of sight care when in the community, and will require life-long support. When and if employment is secured, Arthur will require a high level of 1:1 support. Yes, many disabled individuals are incredible workers who not only keep up with their colleagues but exceed expectations. My son is not one of those people. He will not produce equal work as his typical non-disabled peers. This is not about a parent setting the bar low or not providing accommodations that allow him to produce equal work as his peers. This is about his profound disability that impacts every aspect of his life, including performance at work.

I am concerned about the lack of work opportunity for our son should employers not be allowed the OPTION to offer apprenticeship wage. Employers should be incentivized to hire unique and amazing individuals like my son who have much to offer—but certainly not equal performance or output. Based on countless examples I hear from parents who have adult children more significantly impacted by autism and related differences, work opportunity is already drastically limited to a few hours per week. It's a significant concern for many individuals and those who care for them, resulting in isolation and feelings of low self-worth. I would be happy to connect you with other individuals and their loved ones should you need more personal stories and insight on this serious issue.

My family has been deeply impacted by other legislative efforts that appear to level the playing ground but have the unintentional consequence of reducing opportunity for my child and his ability to live a meaningful life. I fear this legislation would do the same. Please consider individuals with profound intellectual disability in your decision.

Equal wage is not the answer for my child and people like him and this decision will reduce his opportunity to work.

Sincerely,



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Because We Care – Beyond Inclusion Seattle, WA

Katrina Davis
917 24th Ave S
Seattle, WA 98144

36. From: Brian Volkert <volkertbrian@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2017 2:46 PM

To: Herbold, Lisa <Lisa.Herbold@seattle.gov>; Harrell, Bruce <Bruce.Harrell@seattle.gov>; Sawant, Kshama <Kshama.Sawant@seattle.gov>; Johnson, Rob <Rob.Johnson@seattle.gov>; Juarez, Debora <Debora.Juarez@seattle.gov>; O'Brien, Mike <Mike.O'Brien@seattle.gov>; sally.badshaw@seattle.gov; Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: Sub-Minimum Wage - Disabled Workers

Don't close a door without understanding the impact.

I am a parent of a developmentally and physically disabled adult, a Northwest Center Board member, a CPA, a former CEO and a former customer of SKAC.

Until I witnessed the diversity of need and the adaptability of professionals to match skills and funding I had little appreciation for the complexities involved. Then I saw the reward. The smiles, and the interaction of adults getting the opportunity to work and socialize. You can't underestimate that impact to the worker, to their support network and to their guardians.

I wish my daughter's functional level would allow her the opportunity to work. For some disabled a work environment is their only freedom from a singular life.

29

NWC sub minimum wage jobs are matched to funding programs. There is no profit intent. The reward is in the smiles.

If you choose to close the sub-minimum wage exception you will create a gap that can't easily be filled.

Respectfully

Brian Volkert
206-849-6409

1. From: Maggie <fahaines@aol.com>

Sent: Saturday, August 26, 2017 9:29 AM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: Sub minimum Wage

Please see the film "Bottom Dollar" put out by Disability Rights. People are dehumanized by being paid sub minimum wage. I oppose the sub minimum wage.



Because We Care – Beyond Inclusion Seattle, WA

Sincerely

Maggie Haines
Seattle WA
206.409.8145

- 2. From: Matt Schafer <res0sf9v1@hotmail.com>**
Sent: Saturday, August 26, 2017 10:03 PM
To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>
Subject: Submin. pay for disabled

Abolish this discriminatory law that allows lower pay for disabled people!! Disgraceful in this day & age, creates a new form of slavery, IMO.

- 3. From: Jeri Rowe <rowecjar@gmail.com>**
Sent: Monday, August 28, 2017 3:50 PM
To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>
Subject: Disabled lower pay

Karina:

Reading this article infuriated me. As someone who has worked with disAbled individuals, advocated for individuals with disAbilities, I am appalled employers who promote support of the disabled and the City still are challenged by doing the right thing in 2017!

30

Talk about discrimination of a selected class -
these

individual self worth, independence, confidence, strong work ethic and life desire to “be like everyone else”--is impacted
when they cannot make a living wage, move into independent
apartment living and assume “...life like everyone else..

Perhaps the City and its leaders need to employ and train more disabled folks to
set an example when

comes to considering the rights of those with disAbilities. Their talents, contributions and loyalty are
far greater than some able bodied workers!

- Jeri Rowe-Curti

- 4. From: Robin Tatsuda <rtatsuda@hotmail.com>**
Sent: Saturday, September 2, 2017 6:09 PM
To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>
Subject: Support the end to subminimum wage for people with disabilities.

Hi Ms. Bull -



Because We Care – Beyond Inclusion Seattle, WA

I live in Seattle and am very excited about the upcoming decision to end subminimum wage loopholes for people with disabilities in our city. This practice perpetuates a harmful assumption that people with disabilities are less valuable and productive members of our community. I hope you listen closely to our neighbors with disabilities to reshape our labor system into one that values every person, every job, and every contribution. I warn you you be wary of non-disabled parents/caregivers, business owners, and community members whose arguments against this change stem from an archaic, "charity" mindset that disempowers people with disabilities, often to promote the needs of the caregiver or employer. People with disabilities can and should be paid for their contribution to a work environment, like any non-disabled person.

Thank you for your support!

Robin Tatsuda
7743 18th Ave NW, Seattle WA 98117
206.372.6897

5. From: Shaun Bickley <shaunbickley@gmail.com>

Sent: Saturday, September 2, 2017 6:21 PM
To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>
Subject: Comment on Subminimum Wage Proposal

Dear Ms. Bull,

I am writing to urge you to follow the recommendations of the Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities to end subminimum wage and the use of subminimum wage certificates in Seattle.

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As you know, the Commission conducted an extensive four-month review, and received overwhelming support for this course of action from both community members with disabilities and disability organizations. We also contacted the workers making subminimum wage along with their family members and employers, who have all agreed to this timeline.

Subminimum wage is part of a long history of legalized discrimination against disabled people, like institutionalization, forced sterilization, barriers to education and voting, and laws that prevented disabled people from appearing in public. Unlike many of these others, though, subminimum wage is part of Seattle life right now.

Please listen to disabled people. We know what it is we need. Our community has been steadfast in speaking out against this, we don't need able do-gooders who may not even live in Seattle deciding our fate for us.

I look forward to Seattle becoming the first place on the west coast to legalize wage equality for disabled people.

Sincerely,



Because We Care – Beyond Inclusion Seattle, WA

Shaun Bickley
Seattle Resident
Autistic Person

6. From: Sacha Jacobson <sachajacobson@yahoo.com>

Sent: Saturday, September 2, 2017 8:17 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: Comments on sub-minimum wages for people with disabilities

Dear Ms. Bull

I am writing to express solidarity with the Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities' recommendations to end sub-minimum wage and the use of sub-minimum wage certificates in Seattle. As you know, the Commission conducted an extensive four-month review, and received overwhelming support for this course of action from both community members with disabilities and disability organizations. They also contacted the workers making sub-minimum wage along with their family members and employers, who have all agreed to this timeline.

I believe that we should listen to people with disabilities, especially those with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are most impacted by this. They know what they need and we should support them and applaud them in their quest for equality before the law.

I look forward to Seattle becoming the first location on the west coast to grant wage equality to workers with disabilities, and in finally ending this blatantly discriminatory practice.

Sincerely,

Sacha Jacobson RN
Resident of Seattle, 98144

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7. From: Mat n Ant Holliday <2mrhollidays@gmail.com>

Sent: Saturday, September 2, 2017 10:59 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: PWD equal pay

Hi my name is Matthew Lewis a new resident in Belltown and I am writing today because I find the notion that one should be paid less for their work due to a disability to be utterly alarming and it angers me that such a thing could not only be allowed but is actually in practice. I respect you will do the correct thing and represent ALL of the people - yes, even those with disabilities.

8. From: kaybecker <kbecker44@centurytel.net>

Sent: Sunday, September 3, 2017 12:19 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: disability wages

Disabled people deserve the same wage as everybody. Don't pay attention to the misinformation spread by The Friends of Fircrest.



Because We Care – Beyond Inclusion
Seattle, WA

9. From: Kris Falkowski <krzysiekf@comcast.net>
Sent: Sunday, September 3, 2017 1:38 PM
To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>
Subject: support of wage equality for disabled people

Hi,

Just wanted to let your office know, that I am in support of wage equality for disabled people

Regards,

Krzysztof Falkowski

10. From: Bruce Radtke <bwrdtk1973@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 3, 2017 3:18 PM
To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>
Subject: wages

I am emailing you to urge you to end the subminimum wage for disabled people in Seattle. I am writing to you, even though I live in Bellingham, because Seattle sets the standard. Thank you.
Bruce Radtke

11. From: Kate Brunette <katebrunette11@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 3, 2017 5:51 PM
To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>
Subject: Subminimum Wage

Dear Ms. Bull

I am writing to express solidarity with the Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities' recommendations to end subminimum wage and the use of subminimum wage certificates in Seattle.

As you know, the Commission conducted an extensive four-month review, and received overwhelming support for this course of action from both community members with disabilities and disability organizations. They also contacted the workers making subminimum wage along with their family members and employers, who have all agreed to this timeline.

I believe that we should listen to people with disabilities, especially those with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are most impacted by this. They know what they need and we should support them and applaud them in their quest for equality before the law.

I look forward to Seattle becoming the first location on the west coast to grant wage equality to workers with disabilities, and in finally ending this blatantly discriminatory practice.



Because We Care – Beyond Inclusion Seattle, WA

Sincerely,

Kate Brunette

Former Field Organizer, Initiative 1433 to raise the statewide minimum wage

12. From: Desirae Golis <desirae.golis@gmail.com>

Sent: Sunday, September 3, 2017 8:05 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: End Subminimum Wages

Hello,

I'm writing to ask what for something that should be a given - end the dehumanizing subminimum wage given to disabled workers. There isn't much more to say. I'm a Washington resident and don't understand how we can still have so far to go before humanity is actually evident among the human species.

Thanks,

Desirae Golis

13. From: Drew R. Hood <drw516@me.com>

Sent: Monday, September 4, 2017 1:58 AM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: Sub-minimum Wage in Seattle

Dear Ms. Bull

I am writing to express solidarity with the Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities' recommendations to end subminimum wage and the use of subminimum wage certificates in Seattle.

As you know, the Commission conducted an extensive four-month review, and received overwhelming support for this course of action from both community members with disabilities and disability organizations. They also contacted the workers making subminimum wage along with their family members and employers, who have all agreed to this timeline.

I believe that we should listen to people with disabilities, especially those with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are most impacted by this. They know what they need and we should support them and applaud them in their quest for equality before the law.

I look forward to Seattle becoming the first location on the west coast to grant wage equality to workers with disabilities, and in finally ending this blatantly discriminatory practice.

Sincerely,

Drew Hood

Central District Resident



Because We Care – Beyond Inclusion Seattle, WA

14. From: Ben Lindsey <benjaminlindsey@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, September 4, 2017 6:44 AM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: Ending Sub-Minimum Wage for Disabled People in Seattle

Dear Ms. Bull,

I'm writing today in regards to the Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities' recommendations to end sub-minimum wage and the use of sub-minimum wage certificates in Seattle.

The Commission conducted an extensive review and received overwhelming support for this course of action from both community members with disabilities and disability organizations.

We need to listen to people with disabilities on this issue; they know what they need and we should support them and applaud them in their quest for equality before the law.

Seattle has the opportunity to lead the way and become the first city on the west coast to grant wage equality to workers with disabilities, and finally end this blatantly discriminatory practice.

Please follow the Commission's recommendation and end sub-minimum wages for people with disabilities in Seattle.

Thank you,

Ben Lindsey
Communications Director, [36th District Democrats](#)
Lead Activist, [Our Revolution Ballard](#)
benjaminlindsey@gmail.com

15. From: Ed or Harriet Griffith <eh.griffith@yahoo.com>

Sent: Monday, September 4, 2017 12:52 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: sub-minimum wage for disabled people

September 4, 2017

Seattle Office of Labor Standards
810 Third Ave., Suite 375
Seattle, WA 98104-1627
Attn: Karina Bull, OLS Policy Manager

karina.bull@seattle.gov

The New Progressive Alliance at <http://newprogs.org/> fully agrees with the Seattle Disability Commission which voted unanimously to recommend the city end the sub-minimum wage for disabled



Because We Care – Beyond Inclusion
Seattle, WA

people. There is no evidence that lowering the minimum wage increases hiring of handicapped people. In addition, disabled people frequently need more money to survive. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ed Griffith
New Progressive Alliance
1000 17th Ave. #306
Longview, WA 98632-2358

16. From: amber bird <amber@amberbird.com>

Sent: Monday, September 4, 2017 3:32 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: End sub-minimum wage and the use of sub-minimum wage certificates in Seattle

Dear Ms. Bull

I am writing to express solidarity with the recommendations from the Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities' to end sub-minimum wage and the use of sub-minimum wage certificates in Seattle.

As you know, the Commission conducted an extensive four-month review, and received overwhelming support for this course of action from both community members with disabilities and disability organizations. They also contacted the workers making sub-minimum wage, along with their family members and employers, who have all agreed to this timeline.

I believe we should listen to people with disabilities, especially those with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are most impacted by this. They know what they need, and we should support them and applaud them in their quest for equality before the law.

I look forward to Seattle becoming the first location on the west coast to grant wage equality to workers with disabilities, and to finally ending this blatantly discriminatory practice.

Sincerely,
Amber Bird
Resident of Seattle

--

www.amberbird.com

* * *

www.varnishcentral.com

17. From: Karen Taylor <ugali90@aol.com>

Sent: Monday, September 4, 2017 8:50 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: End sub-minimum wage!



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Because We Care – Beyond Inclusion Seattle, WA

Dear Ms. Bull-

I am writing to express solidarity with the Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities' recommendations to end sub-minimum wage and the use of sub-minimum wage certificates in Seattle.

My dear friend Wyatt is making less than minimum wage for all his hard work, and that's not right. As you know, the Commission conducted an extensive four-month review, and received overwhelming support for this course of action from both community members with disabilities and disability organizations. They also contacted the workers making sub-minimum wage along with their family members and employers, who have all agreed to this timeline.

I believe that we should listen to people with disabilities, especially those with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are most impacted by this. They know what they need and we should support them and applaud them in their quest for equality before the law.

I look forward to Seattle becoming the first location on the west coast to grant wage equality to workers with disabilities, and in finally ending this blatantly discriminatory practice.

Sincerely,

-Karen Taylor
1812 28th Ave. S
Seattle, WA 98144
(206) 669-9718

18. From: A. J. Honoré <ajhonore@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, September 5, 2017 9:06 AM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: A message of support for wage equality for disabled people

37

Good Day,

I wanted to send a brief message to the City of Seattle encouraging wage equality for disabled people.

This is pretty cut-and-dry issue for me personally, but I understand that there are some who do not want to see wage equality for all people, regardless of ability, etc.

Many thanks,

AJH

2226 Elliott Ave
Seattle, WA 98121
A. J. Honoré
Seattle Greens

19. From: Tony Rella <tony.rella@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, September 5, 2017 12:33 PM



BECAUSEWECARE1.COM

Because We Care – Beyond Inclusion Seattle, WA

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: Support for Seattle Commission for Peoples with Disabilities' Recommendation

Dear Ms. Bull

I am writing to express solidarity with the Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities' recommendations to end subminimum wage and the use of subminimum wage certificates in Seattle.

As you know, the Commission conducted an extensive four-month review, and received overwhelming support for this course of action from both community members with disabilities and disability organizations. They also contacted the workers making subminimum wage along with their family members and employers, who have all agreed to this timeline.

I believe that we should listen to people with disabilities, especially those with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are most impacted by this. They know what they need and we should support them and applaud them in their quest for equality before the law.

I look forward to Seattle becoming the first location on the west coast to grant wage equality to workers with disabilities, and in finally ending this blatantly discriminatory practice.

Sincerely,

Anthony Rella, MA, LMHC

Seattle Resident and Psychotherapist

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20. From: Laurie Rocello Torres <laurie@allyship.org>

Sent: Tuesday, September 5, 2017 12:41 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: End the Subminimum Wage for People with Disability

Dear Ms. Bull

I am writing to express solidarity with the Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities' recommendations to end subminimum wage and the use of subminimum wage certificates in Seattle.

As you know, the Commission conducted an extensive four-month review, and received overwhelming support for this course of action from both community members with disabilities and disability organizations. They also contacted the workers making subminimum wage along with their family members and employers, who have all agreed to this timeline.

I believe that we should listen to people with disabilities, especially those with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are most impacted by this. They know what they need and we should support them and applaud them in their quest for equality before the law.

I look forward to Seattle becoming the first location on the west coast to grant wage equality to



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Because We Care – Beyond Inclusion Seattle, WA

workers with disabilities, and in finally ending this blatantly discriminatory practice.

Sincerely,

Laurie Rocello Torres

Seattle Central District Resident, District 3

They/Them

Community Facilitator

LGBTQ Allyship

PH: [206-428-1986](tel:206-428-1986)

1105 23rd Avenue

Seattle, WA 98122

LGBTQAllyship.org

laurie@allyship.org

facebook.com/LGBTQAllyship

21. From: Dani B <ghulehd@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, September 5, 2017 4:02 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: End subminimum wage for pwd.

Dear Ms. Bull

I am writing to express solidarity with the Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities' recommendations to end subminimum wage and the use of subminimum wage certificates in Seattle.

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As you know, the Commission conducted an extensive four-month review, and received overwhelming support for this course of action from both community members with disabilities and disability organizations. They also contacted the workers making subminimum wage along with their family members and employers, who have all agreed to this timeline.

I believe that we should listen to people with disabilities, especially those with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are most impacted by this. They know what they need and we should support them and applaud them in their quest for equality before the law.

I look forward to Seattle becoming the first location on the west coast to grant wage equality to workers with disabilities, and in finally ending this blatantly discriminatory practice.

Sincerely,

Danielle Buchanan

Resident of the 34th legislative district - King County, person with disabilities.

22. From: m. smith <megansmithlou@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, September 5, 2017 5:21 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: End the Subminimum wage and the use of subminimum wage certificates in Seattle!



BECAUSEWECARE1.COM

Because We Care – Beyond Inclusion Seattle, WA

Dear Ms. Bull

I am writing to express solidarity with the Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities' recommendations to end subminimum wage and the use of subminimum wage certificates in Seattle. As you know, the Commission conducted an extensive four-month review, and received overwhelming support for this course of action from both community members with disabilities and disability organizations. They also contacted the workers making subminimum wage along with their family members and employers, who have all agreed to this timeline.

I believe that we should listen to people with disabilities, especially those with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are most impacted by this. They know what they need and we should support them and applaud them in their quest for equality before the law.

I look forward to Seattle becoming the first location on the west coast to grant wage equality to workers with disabilities, and in finally ending this blatantly discriminatory practice.

Sincerely,

Megan Smith
Seattle Resident

23. From: Shaun Bickley <shaunbickley@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, September 6, 2017 11:48 AM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Cc: Eric Matthes <ematthes@arcofkingcounty.org>

Subject: Statement from SAIL, PF, and Allies

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Hi Karina,

Eric Matthes asked me to forward the letter that SAIL, People First, and Allies in Accident submitted to the Commission. I've attached it here and copied Mr. Matthes on this email.



BECAUSEWECARE1.COM

Because We Care – Beyond Inclusion Seattle, WA

June 12, 2017

Dear Commissioners,

We are against subminimum wage and working in sheltered workshops.

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) should receive at least minimum wage if they are at a work environment. People with I/DD should not have to choose between unemployment and receiving a wage that is less than the standard amount. When a person is paid subminimum wage we believe it is degrading and takes the dignity away from the person. When a person has a job just to be employed that is tokenizing and disrespectful if someone is at a workplace they should receive supports to allow them to do meaningful work.

We oppose sheltered workshops as a setting for employment. Sheltered workshops segregate people with disabilities and give them little experience that they can use in other employment settings. Sheltered workshops often times are talked about as training centers, but after experiencing and seeing people in sheltered workshops for multiple years with no advancement we know this is not true.

People with I/DD are being taken advantage of by these organizations that have the funds to pay their non-disabled employees high wages while barely paying people with disabilities a wage. Segregated settings like this are prime for abuse and neglect when it is the word of a person with a disability against another person we know that often the person with the disability is not listened to and not given the right tools to file a complaint.

We believe that if you are going to advocate for the rights of people with disabilities you must listen and respect the people with all disabilities that are a part of the movement.

Sincerely,

Shawn Lathan, Chair
Allies in Advocacy

Tiras Smith, President
People First of Washington

Eric Matthes, Chair
Self-Advocates in Leadership



Allies in Advocacy is a group of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities working as equal partners with the state's Developmental Disabilities Council, Protection & Advocacy agency, and University Center on Developmental Disabilities.

The purpose of People First of Washington is to assist people to realize and appreciate that we are "people first" and our disabilities are secondary. We are equal citizens in our communities. We have over 2,000 members across the state of Washington.

Self-Advocates in Leadership (SAIL) is a group of over 200 people across Washington with developmental and intellectual disabilities interested in shaping public policy.

Thanks,
Shaun Bickley

24. From: Ramona Hattendorf <ramona1030@live.com>

Sent: Wednesday, September 6, 2017 6:57 AM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: Support ending subminimum wage

Seattle Office of Labor Standards



BECAUSEWECARE1.COM

Because We Care – Beyond Inclusion Seattle, WA

810 Third Ave., Suite 375
Seattle, WA 98104-1627
Attn: Karina Bull, OLS Policy Manager

Re: Support ending subminimum wage in Seattle

Hello,

I am writing on behalf of The Arc of King County. We promote and protect the rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and provide a variety of services so they can thrive as equal, valued, and active members of the community.

We support ending the subminimum wage in Seattle for people with disabilities.

Nationally, The Arc supports integrated employment at competitive wages <http://www.thearc.org/what-we-do/public-policy/policy-issues/employment> and has a general position statement on employment here: <http://www.thearc.org/who-we-are/position-statements/life-in-the-community/employment>

The Arc of King County supports these positions as well. We also agree with the position taken by Washington's Self Advocates in Leadership that all people deserve to make a fair wage when they work. Self-advocates who speak on this issue believe that subminimum wage, as a model for employment developed in the 1930s, reinforces a life of poverty and isolation. Following are points made about subminimum wage:

- Applies a separate productivity standard not applied to workers without disabilities.
- Unjustly prohibits workers with disabilities from reaching their full vocational and socioeconomic potential.
- Most of the calculations to justify subminimum wage are based on old ideas and false assumptions that disabled workers are less productive than nondisabled workers.
- Successful employment models assist people with significant disabilities to acquire job skills needed for competitive work.
- The federal law that allows subminimum wage exploits disabled workers, paying some pennies an hour for mundane, repetitive tasks.
- Perpetuates segregated workshop models of employment rather than integrated work.

The “Employment First” movement promotes new concepts such as “supported” or “customized” employment that are successful at producing competitive integrated employment outcomes for individuals with significant disabilities that were previously thought to be unemployable.

It is the promise of the Americans with Disabilities Act to open the doors of the American workplace to people with disabilities and to abolish the low expectations that have kept people with disabilities shut out of their communities for decades. We have families in our network who have contacted us who believe that without subminimum wage, their loved one would not be employed or have access to a job – because that is their experience. We would never deny the experience people have had, only



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challenge the thinking about what the current system provides. The Arc of King County believes that there are multiple barriers to employment and subminimum wage is not an effective tool. It promotes segregated work sites, and self-advocates who communicate with us on this issue feel exploited by subminimum wage.

Sincerely,



Ramona Hattendorf | Director of Advocacy
Direct: 206.829.7048

[For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.](#)

We teach civic engagement and leadership skills and connect people to opportunities so they can be the change they want to see. [Learn more.](#)

25. From: Anthony M <miceli86@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, September 6, 2017 12:20 PM
To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>
Subject: Sub Minimum Wage

Dear Ms. Bull

I am writing to express solidarity with the Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities' recommendations to end subminimum wage and the use of subminimum wage certificates in Seattle.

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As you know, the Commission conducted an extensive four-month review, and received overwhelming support for this course of action from both community members with disabilities and disability organizations. They also contacted the workers making subminimum wage along with their family members and employers, who have all agreed to this timeline.

I believe that we should listen to people with disabilities, especially those with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are most impacted by this. They know what they need and we should support them and applaud them in their quest for equality before the law.

I look forward to Seattle becoming the first location on the west coast to grant wage equality to workers with disabilities, and in finally ending this blatantly discriminatory practice.

Sincerely,
Anthony Miceli
Resident of Seattle

26. From: Tina Pinedo <tinap@dr-wa.org>

Sent: Wednesday, September 6, 2017 1:18 PM
To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>
Subject: Sub-minimum Wage Comment - Disability Rights Washington



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[Disability Rights Washington]

Seattle Office of Labor Standards
810 Third Ave., Suite 375
Seattle, WA 98104-1627
Attn: Karina Bull, OLS Policy Manager

Disability Rights Washington is a private non-profit organization that protects the rights of people with disabilities statewide. Through our monitoring and advocacy efforts, we have found that when individuals are given the proper supports and assistive technology, real opportunities independence and autonomy are possible. We support the call to end sub-minimum wage in the City of Seattle as it supports the autonomy and independence of people with disabilities.

One of Disability Rights Washington's current priorities is enforcement of employment rights related to minimum and sub-minimum wages for individuals with disabilities working in sheltered workshops or other segregated employment programs. Recently, Disability Rights Washington's video and social media project, Rooted in Rights produced a documentary called Bottom Dollars, which addresses the issue of sub-minimum wage and sheltered work for people across the country. The documentary highlights stories of people who are currently working or have worked in sheltered work, and people who are working in the community, earning fair and equal wages. An example from an employment agency, Morningside, located in Olympia, WA is featured in the film for successfully phasing out the practice of sub-minimum wage for all of its clients.

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After the City's successful campaign to raise the minimum, now is the time to secure the right to a minimum wage for people with disabilities. We encourage the City of Seattle to recognize that people with disabilities have skill and talents that are worth investing in.

Thank you,

Mark Stroh
Executive Director

Disability Rights Washington
315 5th Avenue S, Suite 850 | Seattle, WA 98104

voice: 206.324.1521 or 800.562.2702 | fax: 206.957.0729 disabilityrightswa.org<<http://disabilityrightswa.org>> |
rootedinrights.org<<http://rootedinrights.org>> | donatetodrw.org<<http://donatetodrw.org>>

27. From: Nikkita Oliver <nikkita.oliver@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, September 6, 2017 2:20 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>; Seattle Peoples Party <peoplespartyseattle@gmail.com>

Subject: End Subminimum Wage. Honor ALL Workers Rights.



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Because We Care – Beyond Inclusion Seattle, WA

Dear Ms. Bull

I and the Seattle Peoples Party are writing to express solidarity with the Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities' recommendations to end subminimum wage and the use of subminimum wage certificates in Seattle.

Subminimum is an inhumane standard of treatment. No city should allow this, but especially not a city like Seattle where we purport to be so progressive and in the pursuit of justice and equity for all.

As you know, the Commission conducted an extensive four-month review. They received overwhelming support for this course of action from both community members with disabilities and disability organizations. They also contacted the workers making subminimum wage along with their family members and employers who all agreed to the review and the need for change.

I believe that we should listen to people with disabilities, especially those with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are most impacted by this. They know what they need. It is incumbent upon those with power and privilege to step aside and should frontline affected communities in their quest for equity and equality under the law.

I look forward to Seattle becoming the first city on the west coast to grant wage equality to workers with disabilities and in ending this blatantly discriminatory practice.

Sincerely,
Nikkita R. Oliver (Rainier Beach) and the Seattle Peoples Party

Nikkita R. Oliver

Community Organizer | Attorney

J.D. | University of Washington | School of Law
M. Ed. | University of Washington | College of Education
206.850.8802 | nikkita.oliver@gmail.com

Creative Justice Case Manager

206.850.8802 | Nikkita@creativejustice.4culture.org
(<http://creativejustice.4culture.org>)

Writer | Performance Poet | Musician | Teaching Artist

206.850.8802 | konikkita@gmail.com

"In order to rise from its own ashes, a Phoenix first must burn." - Octavia Butler

28. From: Marci Carpenter <marcic5@icloud.com>

Sent: Wednesday, September 6, 2017 3:33 PM
To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>
Subject: support for elimination of sub minimum wage policy in Seattle

Hello,



Because We Care – Beyond Inclusion Seattle, WA

My name is Marci Carpenter. I am the President of the National Federation of the Blind of Washington, the most active consumer and civil rights organization of blind persons in Washington state. Below is my testimony to the Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities regarding my support, and that of the National Federation of the Blind, of ending the subminimum wage provision in the City of Seattle. I have also included some supporting information. It does not matter if there are 2, 200 or zero workers with disabilities receiving sub minimum wages in Seattle. The fact that the provision exists in City statute means there is always the possibility of the exemption being granted. Other states have removed such provisions, and there have been improved employment outcomes for disabled workers. The court cases in Iowa and Ohio are a growing legal precedent. The Syracuse University study shows that the idea that these jobs are for training people toward in competitive employment is a myth not born out by facts. I am happy to provide more information upon request.

The National federation of the Blind of Washington (NFBW), a consumer organization of blind/low vision persons, strongly urges the City of Seattle to remove from city ordinance the clause allowing employers to pay disabled workers less than a minimum wage. Paying disabled workers subminimum wages devalues workers and treats us as second class citizens. Disabled workers pay taxes, raise children, create wealth for our city, serve on city boards and commissions and add much to the diversity and vitality of Seattle. The National Federation of the Blind has a long history of opposing sub minimum wage laws at the local, state and national levels.

Paying disabled workers subminimum wages is immoral and unjust, and should be illegal in the City of Seattle. We stand in support of the Mayor's Commission for People with Disabilities and call on Seattle to change current law. Let's send the message that disabled workers in Seattle are just as valued as everyone else.

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Many are asking, "What will happen to those with disabilities who are currently employed under these special subminimum wage certificates?" The real question to be answered is, "What should happen to those people with disabilities currently being exploited under this unjust provision?"

The fundamental fallacy is in considering subminimum-wage work as true employment. The entities that engage in this practice are not employers. They are daycare providers for people with disabilities, offering days filled only with repetitive drudgery for sometimes third-world wages and leading nowhere for their workers but toward despair and greater dependence on social programs and public assistance. Imprisoning these workers in this adult daycare environment keeps them from acquiring the necessary training and opportunity to identify the skills or job that could lead to their competitive, integrated employment at the federal minimum wage or higher. If social supports are necessary for some of these people to sustain themselves, then society should be developing methods that will make it possible for them to gain real skills, to identify appropriate jobs, and to contribute in a meaningful way to the system that supports them.



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A ruling by the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Iowa, Davenport Division, finding that a turkey processing service violated the Americans with Disabilities Act by paying its disabled employees less than federal and state minimum wages. The ruling in Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. Hill Country Farms, Inc. d/b/a Henry's Turkey Services (Case number: No. 3-11-cv-41-CRW-TJS) found that the defendant had "engaged in unlawful and discriminatory pay practices in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act," and awarded the workers \$1.3 million in back pay and other damages. Historically, many vocational rehabilitation personnel have used sheltered employment as a final placement for rehabilitation clients. Arguments have been made repeatedly to the effect that such placements are intended to provide training and upward mobility to the clients so placed. However, my research and that of others indicate that the goal of training and upward mobility has been (in many cases) unrealized (e.g., Blanck, Shartz, & Shartz, "Labor Force Participation and Income of Individuals with Disabilities in Sheltered and Competitive Employment: Cross-Sectional and Longitudinal Analyses of Seven States During the 1980s and 1990s," 44 *Wm. & Mary L. Rev.* 1029 (2003)).

The text of the Ohio judge's decision is long, but I wanted to include it because it illustrates the depth and breadth of this issue. The PDF contains the entire decision.

29. From: Kayla DeGuire <kayla.deguire@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, September 6, 2017 3:54 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: Support of Wage Equality

Dear Karina Bull

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I am writing to express solidarity with the Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities' recommendations to end subminimum wage and the use of subminimum wage certificates in Seattle.

As you know, the Commission conducted an extensive four-month review, and received overwhelming support for this course of action from both community members with disabilities and disability organizations. They also contacted the workers making subminimum wage along with their family members and employers, who have all agreed to this timeline.

I believe that we should listen to people with disabilities, especially those with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are most impacted by this. They know what they need and we should support them and applaud them in their quest for equality before the law.

I look forward to Seattle becoming the first location on the west coast to grant wage equality to workers with disabilities, and in finally ending this blatantly discriminatory practice.

Sincerely,
Kayla DeGuire
King County Resident



Because We Care – Beyond Inclusion
Seattle, WA

The letters below were received after the deadline of September 6, 2017

30. From: Lisa Latchford <lisa@foxassociatesllc.com>

Sent: Thursday, September 7, 2017 4:40 PM

To: Bull, Karina <Karina.Bull@seattle.gov>

Subject: Public Comment in Support of the abolition of the City of Seattle Sub Minimum wage certificate

Dear Karina,

As President of Fox Associates I support minimum wages or hirer for individuals with Developmental Disabilities. In addition as Vice President of the State Community Employment Alliance(CEA), a membership organizations with 45 companies as members. We have a declaration in support of integrated employment and at least minimum wages for all people with disabilities. We wrote this declaration supported by all members in April 2016.

DECLARATION IN SUPPORT OF INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT AND AT LEAST MINIMUM WAGES FOR ALL PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES APRIL 2016

The Community Employment Alliance (CEA) is an advocacy organization working to ensure people with disabilities have the same community employment opportunities as all other citizens.

We will work towards community acceptance and support of all people contributing and participating in society. Inclusive communities embrace diversity not only within their workforce, but within their total social structure, and are models for inclusiveness throughout the Nation.

We believe individuals with disabilities should be prepared with education and training for careers, and have the opportunity for jobs alongside people without disabilities based upon their preferences, gifts, interests and strengths.

We value... Leadership in the movement to integrated employment with at least minimum wages for ALL Boldly defending equality of opportunities and the capacity of everyone to contribute, obtain employment, and earn status and respect Organizational change focused on integrated community employment, resulting in full community inclusion

CEA supports community inclusion and equal opportunity for ALL citizens with disabilities. People with disabilities have a right to equal pay and the same protections regarding minimum wage standards as those citizens who are not disabled.

The transformation to equal wages and integrated community employment for ALL must be planned and systematic to ensure that no one is left behind. Since the implementation of the Working Age Adult Policy in 2006 and the passage of Employment First legislation in 2012, other states have looked to Washington State for leadership. CEA members are the leading organizations providing employment



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services for persons with disabilities in our state and we make a commitment to continue our leadership role as the movement to wage equality gains momentum across the country.

CEA seeks to partner and collaborate with others who share our values and support our position on integrated employment with at least minimum wages.

We commit our expertise and resources toward efforts to create strategies and processes that will result in a unified systematic plan to reach our goal of integrated employment and at least minimum wages for everyone.

Thank you for allowing myself and CEA to participate in the public comment in support of the abolition of the City of Seattle Sub Minimum wage certificate.

Sincerely,

Lisa Fox Latchford

Vice President of the Washington CEA Board of Directors
<http://www.communityemploymentalliance.org>

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Lisa Fox Latchford
President
Fox Associates
425-864-0703
lisa@foxassociatesllc.com

31. From Ivanova Smith - - see letter below



Because We Care – Beyond Inclusion Seattle, WA



Dear Karina Bull of Seattle Labor standards,

I would like to speak to you on the topic of sub-minimum wages. Sub -minimum wage was first used when President Franklyn D Roosevelt created the minimum wage law in the 1930s. It was to exempt certain groups from getting minimum wage such as prisoners, farm laborers and disabled people. Many disability rights activists condemn sub-minimum wage because disabled workers should not get paid less because they have a disability. AtWork! is an employment agency that values the work of people with disabilities. We support clients in Bellevue, Seattle and Issaquah locations. We support efforts to end the practice of sub-minimum in Seattle. We feel all disabled workers should be paid equal wages that non-disabled workers are paid.

As the activist advocate representing AtWork! I applaud Members of Seattle Disability Rights Commission for taking on these values for equal pay for disabled workers. Please consider supporting this motion to end sub-minimum wage for disabled workers! In the past these policies may have been seen as good thing when disabled people were first leaving the institutions and being included in community for the first time. AtWork! used to have sheltered workshops that paid sub-minimum wage. It was seen as progressive in our early years but we started to learn from the perspective of workers with disabilities that they did not like getting paid less and being segregated. We then decided to end use of sheltered work and sub-minimum wages. We transitioned into a community supported employment agency that values the work of disabled people. We are an example that other employment agencies can transition smoothly. We feel Seattle agencies can do the same with proper transition planning and phasing. We encourage you to bring this to Seattle City Council and begin process of ending sub-minimum wage in Seattle.

Thank you,

Ivanova Smith
Activist Advocate
AtWork!
Email: ivanovas@atworkwa.org

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