

**From:** [Traci Brumbles](#)  
**To:** [JWMTR Exhibits](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony - March 18th  
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Good Afternoon Co-Chair Senator Manning, Co- Chair Representative Gomberg and committee members –

My name is Traci Brumbles. I have been the agent, in Rainier for 18 years. During that time, I have witnessed skyrocketing business expenses. Like other small businesses in Oregon the daily cost of keeping the doors open is often daunting. My business has seen tremendous growth, as we have increased sales 700% during my tenure. With that growth as with any business you adjust. We have doubled our staff, plus added more equipment. All this in order to keep the store operating within the OLCC guidelines of; security, personalized service and a clean inviting store. We have always strived to give our employees more than a living wage, bonuses and other employee incentives. Now as we incur higher costs of doing business, we are no longer giving raises, and have cut two positions to part time.

In the past 18 years the increase in agent compensation has been minimal, seldom and in some years decreasing. The State however benefits from our ever-increasing liquor sales - usually far beyond their biennial predictions. Year after year liquor agents have been overlooked and dismissed when it comes to a much-needed compensation increase.

More than a dozen years ago we saw approximately a half of a percent increase to our monthly compensation. In that time frame we have absorbed the cost of paper bags (a bag that the states liquor is put into), utilities, insurance and employee wages to name a few. All paid out of our pocket on the 8.93% compensation the state pays us. Now there is talk of shifting some 14 million dollars to agent

compensation for us to pay the OLCC's bank card fees. These fees are incurred when our customers purchases a bottle of the States spirits. It is not a raise in compensation it is a transfer of responsibility. This is unsustainable, unfair and I believe a harbinger for a failed business plan that will leave many unable to make a living.

Nearly every biennium, we are threatened with privatization schemes, new regulations, and store expansion plans. We are also targeted with minimum wage increases, and a myriad of taxes aimed at small business. Almost any phase of doing business hasn't been touched. We as agents are evaluated on how we operate our stores and then are encouraged to upgrade our stores and to sell more liquor to gain compensation. We then are rewarded for our hard work and store improvements by being paid on a sliding scale. This leaves us no predictability of income. Since I am classified as an exclusive liquor store the income, I receive is only from liquor sales and a few related items that are approved by the OLCC.

In closing today, I ask that Liquor Agents be treated fair. That our hard work be rewarded with a substantial raise in compensation. This way we can achieve all the standards that the OLCC has outlined for us. I ask that the transferring of the bank card responsibility be taken off the table. For Rainier and many other agent's, I've spoken with we will pull the bank card machines out of our stores. I understand it could lead to a loss in sales for me but, it will surely lead to a loss in revenue to the State.

Thank you for your time today and listening to my personal story.  
Traci Brumbles- agent 1052 Rainier

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