

Mary Lazard Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 3262

To the House Committee on Health Care

March 28, 2019

Chair Salinas, members of the committee, my name is Mary Lazard, and I am employed by Safeway.

Due to my current situation I have had no choice but to apply for and receive SNAP benefits which I have to utilize every month. Over the past few years I have also had to intermittently use the Oregon Health Plan. Right now because of the week to week fluctuation in my work hours I am once again forced to apply for OHP for my young son and myself.

I am a single parent and my son and I are currently living with my mom, but due to recent circumstances my son and I have to find another place to live. That task is proving very difficult as I don't bring in enough money a week let alone in a month to pay for rent, utilities, food! Which means I now have to rely on DHS and other resources to help me out! I think it is more unfair that I have a job, work four nights a week but can't afford to live in an apartment. I have to choose between a place for my son and I, Child care -- or food. This is not how to live.

I'm not asking for a hand out by any means but a hand up from my employers who don't know what it's like to live week to week. I would like to receive more scheduled work hours and a better pay rate so I can be independent. I don't feel like this is too much to ask for. I just want a little dignity. I've been told that work is supposed to bring people out of poverty not hold them in it. Unfortunately that is not my experience. I don't need to be rich, but I shouldn't have to choose between feeding my child -or- paying rent and other basic needs. Maybe having the company pay for the services I have to use will open their eyes to just how many others are affected by my employers decision to not pay a living wage.

Thank you for listening to my story. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Mary Lazard
