

Submitter: Robert Jointer

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB2536

February 7, 2023

House Committee on Business and Labor

Oregon State Legislature

900 Court Street, NE

Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee,

As faith leaders who are deeply concerned about our communities, we are writing to share our concerns about the proposed legislation (HB 2536) that would create a price control for vital food delivery. Such legislation would hurt many of our congregants, from food delivery workers, to local business owners, families and older, vulnerable individuals who rely on food delivery more than ever. While we share your goal of supporting restaurants, price controls have a long and proven history disproportionately impacting lower-income communities and communities of color.

If the State Legislature enacts a needlessly restrictive price control measure in Oregon, companies that help restaurants deliver food to customers could have to reduce their services or increase their prices – or both. With higher prices on customers, small, local businesses will receive fewer orders, which would lead to fewer earning opportunities for food delivery workers – many of whom are members of our congregations.

Increasing prices on customers would make food delivery less accessible to lower-income communities, and would significantly hurt local businesses by decreasing order volume. Moreover, we fear that price controls would hit minority-owned businesses especially hard because they may not be able to withstand the loss of business the way that larger restaurants and chains can.

As you know, many members of our congregations and the wider community have been impacted by COVID - from weathering the illness itself, to mourning the loss of friends and family members, or experiencing COVID-related job loss. Most importantly, people of color are disproportionately impacted across the board, with higher death rates and higher rates of unemployment due to COVID-19. As pastors, we have seen and experienced all of this firsthand.

People in our communities are making ends meet the best way that they can, and delivery jobs with companies like DoorDash are a lifeline for many workers who have

been laid off or furloughed. We've heard from our members that delivery jobs make it possible for people to pay for their daily expenses including groceries, utility bills, and rental payments. They provide opportunities for immigrants trying to get a foothold in a new country, students trying to pay for tuition, and workers with full time jobs needing to earn extra income.

We need these services to stay accessible – because families are depending on them, both as sources of income and sources of food. And we need them to continue operating in Oregon because they have become a lifeline for small and locally owned restaurants, including those run and owned by people of color.

We encourage the members of the committee to consider alternatives that would do more to help restaurants without such grave unintended consequences.

Signed,  
Pastor Robert C. Jointer, Bethesda Baptist Church (Portland)