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QuickPoint! – July Minimum Wage Increase Means Maximum Uncertainty

By Cooper Conway

On July 1st, the Portland area's minimum wage will increase from \$12.50 per hour to \$13.25. This wage increase is part of a multi-year phase-in of [Oregon's three-tiered minimum wage law](#), passed by the State Legislature in 2016.

Andy Ricker, Michelin star chef and owner of Portland's Pok Pok restaurant, foresaw the adverse effects of raising the minimum wage in 2016 when he [told the Portland Business Journal that three of his restaurants would close](#) partly due to the hikes in the minimum wage.

Four years later, his prophecy came true—and then some—with an Instagram post on June 15th announcing the closure of four of his restaurants based in Oregon. Sadly, Ricker's former employees will join more than [41 million workers who have filed for unemployment](#) since the coronavirus pandemic started.

Now is not the time to increase the costs of running businesses in Portland. Oregon lawmakers should extend a helping hand to those who are hurting and embrace free-market policies, not price job creators out of the market. Oregon should stop the economic bleeding and roll back regulations that were ill-conceived in the first place. Continuing to add to them when so many businesses are struggling to reopen their doors will only worsen the economic downturn and hurt Oregonians for years to come.

Cooper Conway is a Research Associate at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free-market public policy research organization.