



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Labor Commissioner Condemns Republican Attack on 40-hour Work week and States' Rights**

**Portland---** Oregon Labor Commissioner Dan Gardner today condemned a proposal by U.S. Senator Rick Santorum (R-Pa) as a backdoor attack designed to wipe out the 40-hour work week and freeze the wages of thousands of Oregon restaurant workers.

“This is the proverbial wolf in sheep’s clothing,” said Gardner, a statewide elected official who oversees Oregon’s Bureau of Labor and Industries and administers the state’s minimum wage. “In today’s world of Washington politics Santorum’s alleged compassionate conservatism is really a sneaky attack on Oregon workers and states’ rights.”

Gardner said he called U.S. Senator Gordon Smith this morning to urge him to vote no on any bill carrying Santorum’s anti-worker amendment.

“I know Senator Smith cares about working Oregonians and their families,” said Gardner. “I wanted to let him know that this amendment would cause great harm to tens of thousands of his constituents.”

Sen. Santorum’s plan would, if enacted, wipe out the 40-hour work week by allowing employers to use a two-week period to calculate overtime owed. Gardner said the plan would mean a worker who worked a 50-hour work week would be denied overtime if they worked 30 hours or less the following week.

In addition, the proposal, expected to be introduced today, would allow tips to be credited for purposes of complying with future minimum wage increases and force states like Oregon to impose the new rules. In other words, Oregon’s tipped workers would not be allowed to benefit from future increases in Oregon’s minimum wage.

“This is a blatant and unwarranted attack against our right as a state to go our own way on certain issues,” said Gardner, who pointed out that Oregon voters in 2002 approved indexing the state’s minimum wage to inflation. “While Santorum’s amendment appears to advocate an increase in the federal minimum wage by \$1.10 an hour over the next 18 months, it would actually freeze the wages of thousands of Oregon tipped workers.”

