



*Office of Life, Justice and Peace
Campaign for Human Development
Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon
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March 11, 2013

Representative Doherty, Chair
Representative Kennemer, Co-Vice Chair
Representative Barton, Co-Vice Chair
House Business and Labor Committee
Oregon Legislative Assembly

Re: HB 2976, HB 2977, and HB 3142

Dear Chair Doherty, Co-Vice Chair Kennemer, Co-Vice Chair Barton, and Members of the Committee:

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland and the Office of Life, Justice and Peace ask you to support HB 2976, HB 2977, and HB 3142. These bills will reduce wage theft and provide means to collect wages owed.

Wage theft is the underpayment or non-payment of the wages workers have earned for their labor. It occurs when workers do not receive minimum wage or the agreed rate or overtime, when they are paid under the table or in cash, when they are not paid tips, and too often not paid at all.

Wage theft is more than underpayment or non-payment. Wage theft is illegal.

An increasing problem area is the mislabeling of employees as independent contractors. Independent contractors have no guarantees of minimum wage and overtime. They do not receive workers' compensation or unemployment compensation. They are not covered by anti-discrimination laws.

Wage theft occurs in most industries and affects all people. But it affects the low-wage workers whose wages are stolen the most. These workers are left without money to pay for food, shelter, and provide for their children. Wage theft denies exploited workers of their dignity. The Catholic Church has been a long-time advocate for the dignity of work and rights of workers; wage theft is a violation of our principles.

We support state policies that will strengthen protections and close loopholes in current employment law to guarantee that all workers are paid the wages they have legally earned.

You will be hearing more about bills to address the problem of wage theft. Please support and vote for these bills. All workers must be paid for their labor.

Respectfully,



Matt Cato
Director of the Office of Life, Justice and Peace