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Honorable member of the Oregon State Senate,

Please support HB 2977

HB 2977 addresses wage theft in the construction industry – a rampant problem that leaves workers without promised wages, and makes it harder for legitimate contractors in our communities to compete for bids where there is often only a small profit margin.

HB 2977 is the product of multiple sessions of debate, months of discussions between stakeholders and opponents, and ultimately a series of compromises that produced a bill that carefully balances the need to protect workers in this industry without inadvertently creating a burden for high-road businesses.

Upon passage of HB 2977 labor contractors (companies who provide workers to contractors in the construction industry) will be held to the same standards farm labor contractors are held to. Wage theft was once a common problem in the farm industry. Although labor contractor regulations were controversial at first they have created a stronger industry, supporting Oregonians who do this work and the people who make a living helping them find work. It has cut down on the businesses whose only goal is to make a quick buck at the expense of workers and the state.

Now, as we've seen an uptick in wage theft in the construction industry, we must address the problem. While we hope that HB 2977 is the start of a broader conversation about how to address wage theft in all industries in Oregon we are glad to see the legislature take immediate action to help workers and business owners in an industry where the problem is particularly egregious.

We encourage your support of HB 2977-B, the bi-partisan compromise bill that helps workers and businesses while cutting down on flight by night contractors and wage theft that robs all our communities of the resources they need.

Thank you for your support.

Tom Chamberlain
President, Oregon AFL-CIO

John Mohlis
Executive Secretary, Oregon State Building and
Construction Trades Council