

To: Senate Committee on Workforce
From: The Main Street Alliance of Oregon Small Businesses
Date: March 9, 2015
Re: Letter in Support of SB 718

Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Thatcher and Members of the Committee,

The Main Street Alliance of Oregon, a coalition of over 2500 small businesses across Oregon, supports SB 718 to provide employees across Oregon with simple tools to help ensure fairness in the workplace, and to level the playing field for honest small business owners in the state who play by the rules.

Our members oppose wage theft. It creates an uneven playing field for honest employers. We are forced to compete against those that lower their costs by cheating their workers. We believe SB 718 will help Oregon small business owners by making it harder for unscrupulous employers to hide and easier for workers to get help and recover their stolen wages. These changes will discourage employers from cheating their employees in the first place.

For example, the wage lien provisions will make it harder for employers to get away with not paying their workers. The employee presumption provision is also important because the increasing practice of mislabeling of employees as independent contractors threatens employers who do follow the rules. Misclassification allows employers to avoid responsibility for minimum wage and overtime, unemployment, workers' compensation, and payroll taxes. Small business owners who do not misclassify our employees are undercut by those who do.

The Main Street Alliance of Oregon also opposes wage theft because it harms our communities. Wage theft denies income and commerce to our communities. It lowers consumption and spending that directly affects business. Wage theft means a race to the bottom for workers, businesses, and our communities. In Oregon, we need to lead the way and race to the top.

Please support SB 718. Take action to make Oregon a state where work is honored and wage theft is not tolerated.

Yours respectfully,



Jim Houser, co-chair
Hawthorne Auto Clinic, Portland



Mark Kellenbeck, co-chair
BrainJoy LLC, Medford