

PRELIMINARY STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No Revenue Impact

Action Date:

Action:

Meeting Dates:

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WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) to increase investigatory staff dedicated to enforcing pay equity and gender discrimination laws. Appropriates \$100,000 to BOLI to support the staffing increase. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Need for greater enforcement of existing pay equity laws
- Increase in BOLI pay equity enforcement staffing
- The absence of additional investigation and enforcement personnel in the agency's budget request
- The percentage of inquiries to BOLI that relate to gender discrimination

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

The -1 amendment appropriates \$79,863 General Fund to BOLI, which equates to a phased in, full-time equivalent position of 0.50 FTE. This amount is predicated on the assumption that the position would be full-time, but not begin until July 1, 2016.

BACKGROUND:

The Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) enforces anti-discrimination laws that apply to workplace, housing and public accommodations; enforces wage and hour laws; educates employers to avoid potential violations; and partners with labor, business and other organizations to develop a highly skilled, competitive workforce in Oregon.

Congress passed the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in order to prohibit sex discrimination in the workplace. These two laws make arbitrary discrimination against women illegal when setting wages. In June 2013, Governor Kitzhaber signed into law Senate Bill 744, prompting the BOLI Council on Civil Rights to further study pay equity in Oregon and to provide recommendations for closing wage gaps. The Council found that pay inequality exists between men and women in Oregon and is based on discrimination, education and work-life conflict.

Senate Bill 786 instructs BOLI to increase staff to enforce pay equity and gender discrimination laws. The measure provides \$100,000 to fund the staffing increase.