



February 17, 2017

To: Members of the House Business and Labor Committee

Fr: Matt Swanson, SEIU Oregon State Council

Re: House Bill 2856

Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee:

My name is Matt Swanson and I am the Executive Director of the SEIU Oregon State Council. SEIU represents over 60,000 workers in a variety of public and private sector professions throughout the state of Oregon. We urge you to support House Bill 2856 and create outreach grants to assist workers trying to navigate the state's wage and hour laws.

SEIU has been part of a work groups in the past formed by this and other committees to examine ways to improve the enforcement of Oregon's wage and hour laws. A key factor that has been identified was that workers, especially those in non-union environments, lack resources to properly assist them in understanding the state's wage and hour laws.

For comparison, please think about the way that the Bureau of Labor and Industry's budget has been developed to provide technical assistance to the employers. Technical assistance is available to employers through seminars, a call center and in partnership with local groups like a chamber of commerce. That is a good thing for employers looking to ensure that the wage and hour laws of our state are being followed across the board. BOLI reports that technical assistance funding for employers is \$2.09 million - \$416,879 GF and \$1.67 million other funds. As a matter of fairness, community outreach grants can help give workers a place to go to receive more resources to identify instances of wage and hour violations and receive proper advice to protect their rights.

When workers and employers have a common understanding of wage and hour laws there are better outcomes in terms of potential disputes. A key component of this work needs to be recognizing the important role that community organizations like culturally-specific groups, immigrant and refugee groups LGBT organizations other community groups can play as a trusted place for workers to go. Having a common understanding of our wage and hours laws will also lead to better resolution of disputes.

Thank you for your time and please support House Bill 2856.