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TO: Joint Committee on Transportation and Economic Development
RE: PUBLIC TESTIMONY on SB 5516

I am writing in support of BOLI's proposed budget package of \$1,771,835. I am an attorney who has been practicing employee-side Labor and Employment law in Multnomah County for more than 30 years. I have lectured and given presentations on many labor and employment topics, and testified before legislative committees on these topics.

A substantial portion of our practice involves wage and hour litigation. In the last few years, we have seen a significant increase in calls to our firm for assistance from workers who have meritorious claims of wage and hour violations by their employers. These violations include failure to pay overtime, refusal to pay wages or paid time off owed upon termination, requiring workers to work off-the-clock, unlawful payroll deductions, misclassification of workers as independent contractors, and many others.

Our firm routinely (almost daily) turns away claimants with meritorious claims because we simply lack the capacity to handle them all. We often direct them to seek assistance from BOLI's wage and hour division, but we often hear that BOLI cannot or will not pursue many claims; those that BOLI does pursue are typically settled for the amounts owed; this provides no incentive for the offending employers to correct their unlawful practices. It is clear that BOLI requires more resources if it is to help even a small fraction of the workers who have meritorious claims against their employers, and further resources beyond this request if BOLI is to incentivize employers to comply voluntarily with their legal obligations.

I urge you to grant BOLI's budget request in its entirety.

Sincerely,
BENNETT HARTMAN, LLP

Henry J. Kaplan