



March 28, 2019

To: Co-Chairs Senator Manning Jr. and Representative Gomberg and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development

I am writing to you today as a board member of the [Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice](#). We are an organization made up diverse faith communities, faith leaders, and individuals called by our conscience to respond actively and publicly to the suffering of our immigrant brothers and sisters in the U.S. due to unjust immigration policies. **We support Commissioner Hoyle's Proposed investment Package for BOLI.**

Wage theft in Oregon is systematic and occurs across sectors, affecting everyone from domestic workers to nurses to construction workers. In Oregon, it happens most in the restaurant and construction industries, and it is especially harmful to low-wage, temporary, and immigrant workers who are already struggling to make ends meet as it is.

Work is meant to be an expression of our God-given dignity and creativity. When wage theft occurs, work instead becomes a means of exploitation.

Our Jewish, Christian and Muslim faiths speak out strongly against this injustice. Not only does one of the Ten Commandments tell us, "thou shalt not steal," scriptures such as Deuteronomy 24:14 specifically warn employers not to withhold their workers' wages from them. And the Prophet Mohammad is clear: "Pay the worker while the sweat is still wet upon their brow."

Strong laws aren't enough to ensure that all employers will do the right thing. While a majority of Oregon employers follow the law, some are cutting costs in ways that hurt workers and the businesses forced to compete. BOLI needs the resources to ensure that enforcement mechanisms are effective at holding unlawful employers accountable.

Over time, the BOLI resources have eroded. In the past twenty-five years, the state has about half the capacity to support worker wage claims in an environment that has gotten much more complex.¹

The Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice supports Commissioner Hoyle's funding request.

¹ Oregon Center for Public Policy, [Oregon's Capacity to Fight Wage Theft Has Eroded](https://www.ocpp.org/2019/03/28/boli-capacity-fight-wage-theft-eroded/), <https://www.ocpp.org/2019/03/28/boli-capacity-fight-wage-theft-eroded/>

