



STUDIO MECHANICS OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Technicians, Artists & Allied Crafts
of the United States & Canada

February 24, 2021

TO: Chair Power, Vice-Chair Wallan, and Members of the House Subcommittee on Civil Law

RE: House Bill 2205, The Just Enforcement Act

IATSE Local 488, Studio Mechanics of the Pacific Northwest strongly supports HB 2205 to give workers the power they need to enforce their rights at work. We support this policy as part of the 2021 legislative agenda and our ongoing work to ensure racial, gender, and economic justice for residents in Oregon. We represent over 700 workers in 19 Crafts employed as the crew on motion picture, TV, streaming, and other digital media. Additionally as the Union behind Entertainment we represent the interests of and are the voice for all workers in our Digital Media Ecosystem.

Every worker deserves to be paid for a fair day's work and have their rights protected
no matter where they work or how much they make.

Over the past few decades, our state agencies charged with enforcing important labor protections have experienced a steady decline in funding and resources, while the size of Oregon's workforce has grown. Compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, wildfires, and an economic crisis those agencies have been overwhelmed by complaints to which they do not have the capacity to respond.

In Oregon alone, wage theft claims submitted by workers between '06 and '19 amounted to more than \$50 million.

JEA is an important step in our ability to resolve our members' issues which are not being efficiently or effectively addressed by State Agencies. Even when the state does enforce workplace laws, companies rarely face penalties. In claims brought to the state between 2006 and 2019, only 1% of Oregon businesses found guilty of wage theft ended up paying penalties imposed by the state. Wage theft is a nationwide problem that affects every industry but the Entertainment Industry is particularly plagued by misclassification especially on non-union commercial productions. These jobs are short term and temporary and are often with out of state employers.

When workers do find the courage to speak up at work, they often face retaliation from employers. Since local producers often work for multiple production companies, if they decide to black ball a worker for reporting misclassification or workplace safety, the worker may face untraceable and hard to prove retaliation. The worker is simply never hired again by that producer.

While many complaints go uninvestigated, companies that are doing right by workers are at an economic disadvantage for choosing to follow the law. JEA would create a culture of compliance to level the playing field for small, medium, and large businesses who follow the law.

The Just Enforcement Act would provide workers with a voice in their workplace and create a revenue stream for state agencies to increase enforcement capacity. Providing an avenue for workers to partner with their Unions and trusted community organizations to file suits on the state's behalf would allow workers who fear speaking out alone and risking their jobs to have the community at their backs while they do so. IATSE Local 488 urges you to support HB 2205.

Please pass JEA and take the target off the backs of working people!

Signed,

cdavid cottrill

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