

3/8/2023

Re: HB 2057

Written testimony in lieu of verbal testimony:

Chair Holvey and Members of the committee, my name is Art Cortez, I am a co-owner of The Harver Company, a mid-sized construction company in Wilsonville with offices in Eugene and Bend. Harver does work throughout the State of Oregon .

I am also the president of the associated wall and ceiling contractors, a trade association dedicated to the promotion of the framing, hanging and finishing of drywall and other wall systems.

I also sit on committees called COAC oversight for the Rose quarter cap project working with ODOT. CEIC advisory committee with Portland's procurement department and a couple of other committees.

We want to recognize the value of good businesses that work hard to do pay their employees appropriately while competing for construction projects. I also want to support small businesses so they can thrive instead of being hurt before they even get a fair shot at success. Wages theft hurts all the businesses trying to do things right but especially hurts the small Minority firms as they start their business. For all these reasons and more, I have spoken before this body repeatedly over the years and that is why I am speaking as a business owner and an industry advocate today. We have to figure out a way to stop wage theft without attacking the victims

I will be very brief. I am speaking on HB 2057 today because of the enormous underlying issue. Too much of the construction industry is carried on by people taking advantage of individuals, many of whom who do not feel that they can voice a formal complaint today.

The associated wall and ceiling contractors wants to point out that the vast majority of commercial and residential contractors are treating their employees and subcontractors appropriately. However, wage theft is still all too common. This practice continues in part because of the willingness of some contractors to turn a blind eye. It is only as a team that can we help the industry and allow legitimate contractors to compete as well as help the individual workers get paid what they were promised. Thank you for allowing us to briefly add our voice to this important issue.