



Oregon Businesses Support BOLI's 2023-25 Biennium Budget Request

The Oregon Bureau of Labor & Industries (BOLI) provides critical services to Oregon's businesses, ensuring that they have the information they need to operate their businesses and provide for their employees. To remain effective, it is important that BOLI received adequate funding, which is why we urge you to support its 2023-25 biennium budget request.

BOLI Provides Vital Compliance Guidance to Businesses

Oregon's employers have faced significant challenges in the last decade implementing complex, new labor and employment laws and adapting to changes to existing laws at the state and federal level. These adjustments have put heavy burdens on employers seeking to implement them effectively and appropriately, while also running their businesses. The role that BOLI plays in providing compliance guidance and clarifying employer obligations is critical.

Employers across the state rely on BOLI's Technical Assistance program as a resource as they work to update handbooks and procedures in a rapidly evolving regulatory environment. This was particularly important as employers faced nearly weekly changes to employment requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic and turned to Technical Assistance for advice about return-to-work provisions. We urge you to preserve all funding for Technical Assistance as an essential resource for many businesses as they adapt to new employment laws.

BOLI Lacks Administrative Law Capacity

BOLI frequently plays the important role of advising businesses on the state of a new law years before a court weighs in. For example, in February of this year, businesses received implementation advice from the Department of Justice on a law that became effective in January. BOLI needs administrative law capacity to be able to meet the meet these demands to provide sound – and timely – compliance advice to businesses so they can focus on running their businesses.

Increase in Wage and Civil Rights Complaints

BOLI is relatively unique in that it investigates, prosecutes, and adjudicates workplace complaints. The Bureau has seen a significant uptick in workplace complaints in the last few years, with 73% more Wage and Hour cases than last year and a current backlog of more than 1,000 Civil Rights Cases. Increasing internal capacity at BOLI will help resolve complaints more efficiently, resulting in better outcomes for workers, business, and the agency.

Addressing BOLI-Related Litigation

BOLI itself has been subject to a fair amount of litigation in recent years. Investing in BOLI's internal law capacity will help reduce these external liabilities and will allow the agency to focus on resolving workplace disputes.

A functioning agency, including enforcement, is essential to Oregon businesses. As conscientious employers, we support the efforts of the agency to hold wrongdoers responsible and ensure workers' rights are protected. We appreciate the work the agency has done in recent years to take a balanced approach to improve services to both employers and employees.

We urge you to support BOLI's budget request for the 2023-25 biennium.

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