



To: Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development

From: Anthony Castaneda, SEIU Local 503

Date: March 8, 2023

RE: **Support for SB 5515 BOLI Budget**

Dear Co-Chairs Woods and Gomberg and members of the subcommittee,

My name is Anthony Castaneda, and I am testifying on behalf of SEIU Local 503 in **support of SB 5515** relating to the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) 2023-2025 budget. SEIU Local 503 represents over 72,000 workers across the State of Oregon and more than 100 dedicated employees at BOLI who work tirelessly to meet the agency's core mission. There are seven key areas of investment we would like to elevate and strongly support.

Agency Operations: BOLI plays a critical role in ensuring workers have a place to go when they have wage & hour complaints or have experienced discrimination. Workers can rely on BOLI to enforce civil rights law in public spaces and in housing. Employers turn to BOLI for guidance in complying with the law and for support in recruiting a highly-skilled workforce to grow Oregon's economy. This work cannot happen if the Agency doesn't have sufficient staff to meet the demand – which has seen a marked increase over the past several years. SEIU Local 503 supports the Agency's request for investments and additional position authority to meet key agency needs and ensure that our members have the support they need to serve Oregonians:

- Resources to plan for the replacement of BOLI's outdated case management system.
- Conciliation (2 investigator positions): BOLI ran a successful pilot program to resolve more than 200 cases over an 18-month period through conciliation. The program's results demonstrate an efficient use of resources, leading to a reduction of the agency's backlog and better outcomes for parties involved.
- Wage and Hour personnel (2 investigators and 1 support staff): Growing capacity at the agency is essential to resolve time-sensitive claims.
- Administrative Law Officer (1 position): BOLI provides compliance advice to businesses on the front end, which reduces the need for regulatory intervention and creates better conditions for workers.

- Public Records support (1 position): BOLI is working to ensure that it has a transparent and sustainable public records policy. This position will help remedy some of the delays, while ensuring that complainants who leave the BOLI process have their records in advance of any court filing deadlines (which, generally speaking, apply 90 days after exiting the BOLI process).
- Human Resources support (1 position): In order for BOLI to grow and ensure that employees and agency operations are supported in a timely manner, the agency needs an additional HR person to serve its nearly 140 employees.
- The budget also provides a permanent position to assist business and apprenticeship programs in eastern Oregon, as well funding to make the Veterans' Outreach position permanent.

Today, you will hear from one of our members, Ibrahim Coulibaly. Ibrahim is an Investigator with the Civil Rights Division and President of the BOLI SEIU sub local. He will share his experience as an investigator and the need for additional capacity to address the backlog of cases. It's important to adequately staff the office to quickly resolve issues as they arise.

Lastly, I ask that the members of this committee support SB 5515 and key areas to invest in the critical work that the frontline employees at BOLI do every day.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Anthony Castaneda