



A STRONG VOICE FOR OREGON'S WORKERS

TO: Co- Chairs Girod and Holvey
Members of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capitol Construction
FR: Catie Theisen, OR AFL-CIO
RE: SB 5701-2 BOLI Investments Support

March 6, 2023

The Oregon AFL-CIO represents 300,000 workers across Oregon and is a voice for all workers in the legislative process. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the BOLI investments in SB 5701-2 to better support and enhance the Bureau of Labor and Industries's budget.

We know that all the good laws that the Oregon legislature has passed over the years – from civil rights, sick and medical leave, prevailing wage, apprenticeships, pay equity and so many more – are truly only as good as they are able to be enforced. We are excited about the leadership, investments and creative enforcement strategies that the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries continues to take on and we know that additional investments are critical to effectively and meaningfully ensure that Oregon continues to be a leader in the nation when it comes to worker protections. SB 5701-2 makes progress to address some of these capacity challenges.

Sections 45 and Sections 345 to 350 in the -2s leverages some federal and other sources of money to begin the case management replacement project, for public records software improvements and implement ARPA expenditures. This modest funding request will help improve software efficiencies so that BOLI can help workers and employers in a timely manner, ensure that public records request can be delivered with expediency as individual cases are addresses and patterns identified, and allow BOLI to do in-person site compliance reviews to certify state and federal registered apprenticeship programs.

As Oregon's economy continues to grow, the need for a properly funded Bureau of Labor and Industries is vital to ensure that workers and employers know their rights and responsibilities. These investments continue to take meaningful steps to appropriately resource this critical department. However, we will note that more can be done to fully resource this agency going forward, particularly in making sure employers actually pay their penalties, meaningful and ongoing engagement with historically and currently marginalized workers, increased resources for those who do not speak English, and more avenues and remedies for those workers who may fear retaliation for filing a complaint with a state agency.

Resourcing the Bureau of Labor and Industries to swiftly, comprehensively and meaningfully enforce our state labor laws is critical to workers, employers and our economy as a whole. We respectfully request the committee support the BOLI investments of SB 5701-2 to help ensure that the agency's budget can continue to catch up with the number of Oregonians it serves.