



To: Senate Committee on Labor and Business

From: Ibrahim Coulibaly, SEIU 503

Date: March 20, 2025

RE: SEIU 503 in support of SB 946

Dear Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Bonham, and members of the committee,

My name is Ibrahim Coulibaly, and I am writing to express my support for SB 946 as it relates to funding the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI). The work that BOLI does is indispensable not only for protecting the rights of Oregon's workforce but also for promoting economic fairness and stability across the state.

I am a resident of Eugene, Oregon and a constituent in House District 6 and Senate District 4. I am a union member of SEIU Local 503 and I serve in various roles, including President of the BOLI Sublocal, Chair of the Central Table Bargaining team, CAPE Council President, Chair of the Afram Caucus, and a member of Civil and Human Rights Committee.

SB 946 would authorize the Bureau of Labor and Industries to request funds from the Workers' Benefit Fund for expenses related to carrying out the commissioner's statutory duties. With recent legislation passed and technology modernization efforts, BOLI has seen a major uptick in claims from workers. Changes have made it easier for workers to raise concerns directly with the bureau. BOLI staff have been unable to keep pace with the demand for services. This leads to delays in investigations by months, leaving workers stranded with nowhere to go for justice. While workers wait for their case to be resolved and receive payment, they may miss a mortgage/rent payment or forgo medication/groceries.

BOLI plays a pivotal role in ensuring that workers are treated fairly, paid fairly, and protected from exploitation. With the ever-changing landscape of the workplace, it is critical to have a robust and responsive office to address the challenges faced by workers,

especially in sectors that are more prone to wage theft, unsafe conditions, and discrimination.

BOLI enforces Oregon's minimum wage laws, ensuring that hardworking Oregonians can support themselves and their families. It also protects against discrimination, ensuring that workers are not subjected to unfair treatment based on their race, gender, age, disability, or who they love.

Sustainable funding for BOLI also benefits employers. By providing clear guidance on labor laws and offering education and outreach, BOLI helps businesses stay in compliance with state laws, avoiding costly legal disputes and fostering better relationships with employees. Employers who treat their workers fairly are more likely to have higher morale, lower turnover, and greater productivity, all of which contribute to a more vibrant economy.

In conclusion, I ask the members of this committee to pass SB 946 to ensure that the Bureau of Labor and Industries has the resources to respond to the needs of workers and businesses in a timely manner. The work they do impacts every Oregonian, ensuring that our workplaces are fair, safe, and just for all.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ibrahim Coulibaly,