

SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Bureau of Labor and Industries Investments and Implementation Progress

To: Ways and Means Full Committee
From: Transportation and Economic Development Subcommittee
Carrier: Representative Gomberg

On February 5th, the Transportation and Economic Development Subcommittee received a report from the Bureau of Labor and Industries on the progress of the implementation of investments made in the 2025 legislative session.

During the 2025 session, the Legislature approved approximately \$18.5 million and 59 new positions at the Bureau of Labor and Industries to expand civil rights and wage and hour enforcement, strengthen business operations, and address staffing shortages and growing case backlogs. As part of that investment, a budget note directed the agency to report back to the Transportation and Economic Development Subcommittee on the implementation of 50 of those positions and whether the investment is improving staffing stability, reducing caseloads, and addressing backlogs.

As of January 2026, the agency has filled 28 of the 50 positions covered by the budget note. The remaining positions are currently vacant, with hiring ongoing and phased through the first half of 2026. Hiring and retention indicators have improved, and most of the new Civil Rights Division staff are now onboarded. Intake backlogs in both the Civil Rights and Wage and Hour Divisions have declined.

Investigation backlogs remain significant, particularly in the Wage and Hour Division because it has not yet reached its fully authorized staffing level, and many newly hired investigators are still completing training. Once the approved positions are filled and reach full productivity, the overall impact on investigation timelines will be more readily discerned.

The Transportation and Economic Development Subcommittee recommends acknowledging receipt of the report, with instructions that the Bureau of Labor and Industries provide a follow-up status report with relevant data on the implementation of investments made in the 2025 legislative session and their effects on staffing stability, caseloads, and backlogs to the Emergency Board in December 2026.