



To: House Committee on Labor and Workforce Development
Re: House Bill 4027
On: February 4, 2026

Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Muñoz and Scharf, members of the committee,

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of SEIU Local 503 in support of HB 4027 to sustainably fund the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI). 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.

You as lawmakers can be proud of the laws you have enacted to make Oregon one of the best states for workers. However, it is not enough to have laws on the books, those laws need to be enforced. When agencies are not resourced to manage their workload, then it follows that they fall behind and caseloads become unmanageable. To put this in more specific terms: In Washington, there are nearly 2 staff for every 100,000 workers. In Oregon, there is less than 1 staff for the same number of workers. That is fundamentally not fair to the employers and workers who depend on BOLI nor is it sustainable or career-sustaining for our members who work there.

When there is a backlog of claims or cases, that means that workers and their families have to wait longer to get what they are owed. 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. Again, 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.

Increasing workloads and the ongoing dynamic created by inconsistent funding commitments from the legislature make retaining qualified staff a significant challenge. This is why we greatly appreciated the legislature's leadership last session. The one-time funding from the Worker's Benefit Fund was able to fill the tremendous backlog of cases. However, without further and permanent action, just as that backlog is filled, we will be in the same position again of piecing together a solution. Our members simply cannot live with that uncertainty.

This is why we were happy to participate in and appreciate the work of all stakeholders who worked on the interim workgroup that produced the legislation before you today. A minimal increase in the assessment to the Worker's Benefit Fund to go to a separate account and a minimal increase to the prevailing wage



fee cap will give BOLI the stable funding it needs to improve the backlog, serve more Oregonians, and meet its core mission.

Without this action now, this solution will become more costly for workers and employers and the state runs a high risk of losing the talented staff BOLI has hired. We're asking the legislature to pass HB 4027 to ensure that BOLI can operate as intended for years to come.

Thank you for your consideration,

Courtney Graham
Political Director
SEIU Local 503