



February 4, 2026

To: Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Hayden, Members of the Senate Committee On Labor and Business

From: Russell Lum, Legislative and Political Organizer, Oregon Nurses Association

Re: **Support of SB 1506-1**

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

Thank you for receiving this testimony on Senate Bill 1506-1 on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA). ONA represents a diverse community of more than 24,000 nurses and healthcare professionals throughout Oregon. Together we use our collective power to advocate for critical issues impacting patients and healthcare workers including a more effective, affordable, and accessible healthcare system; better working conditions for all healthcare professionals; and healthier communities.

ONA is adamant that the Bureau of Labor and Industries be set up for success, to deliver for Oregon workers and employers. BOLI's functions are essential to healthcare workers, across broad swaths of its mission but in particular in ensuring lawful hospital staffing. In the 2023 session, the legislature passed HB 2697, safe hospital staffing, and BOLI has an enforcement role under this law. If BOLI is not resourced to meet its statutory duties, staffing – and patient care – will be less safe in Oregon.

Building on the important work of the 2025 session, it is time to create a fund that BOLI draws from in perpetuity, to support existing and new positions.

The bill increases the prevailing wage cap to \$12,500 from \$7,500, a move estimated to bring in an additional \$1.5 million.

The BOLI Worker Benefit Fund will be separate from the existing Workers' Benefit Fund, leaving the workers' compensation system untouched. This change will cost workers \$2/year. This minimal expense will yield an estimated \$19 million and is critical to a well-functioning BOLI system that fundamentally gives workers their access to justice over civil rights and wage issues.

The Legislature must pass this bill this session. Without this bill, the cost of funding these positions will go up on whomever is paying for it because there will be less time to collect the money before the one-time funded positions expire at the end of the 2027-2029 biennium. Without a funding guarantee, BOLI staff tasked with critical functions like reducing the backlog will start to look for alternate employment – inhibiting the Bureau's ability to maintain their trajectory of getting rid of the wage and hour backlog by mid-2029.



Oregonians deserve better than to wait years to have their rights on the job enforced. SB 1506-1 finally starts to put BOLI on the path to sustainable investment so they can deliver timely services to Oregonians, workers and employers alike.

Thank you for considering SB 1506-1; we urge your support.

Sincerely,
Russell Lum