



**February 13, 2017**

**To:** Members of the House Business and Labor Committee

**Fr:** Matt Swanson, SEIU Oregon State Council

**Re:** Support for efforts to combat Wage Theft, House Bill 2180 and House bill 2181

Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee:

According to records provided to the Oregon Center for Public Policy from the Bureau of Labor and Industry only 28% of successful claims against employers who short change workers are paid and an astonishing 72% have not been paid.<sup>1</sup> The legislation before you today presents an opportunity to improve the tools available to workers who are seeking payment of wages that were owed based on our state's wage and hour laws.

The bills presented today could give workers some important tools in combatting wage theft.

- HB 2180: Establishes right of employee for civil action based on unpaid wages.
- HB 2181: Creates rebuttable presumption against employer if employer takes certain adverse actions against employee within 90 days of employee's protected, wage-related activity.

SEIU supports this, and other efforts to give workers more tools to combat wage theft. We support efforts by the committee to examine the ways that our state can take steps to ensure that workers are paid what they are owed.

This is incredibly important for many of the workers in industries that we represent. Working women, people of color and some of our states most vulnerable workers are victims of wage theft.

Thank you,

Matt Swanson  
Executive Director  
SEIU Oregon State Council

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<sup>1</sup> OCPP analysis of Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries data of wage claims filed July 2010 to June 2013.