



To: Senate Workforce Committee
From: Oregon Working Families Party
Re: SB 750, The Oregon Corporate Accountability Act

Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Knopp, and Members of the Committee –

I am writing on behalf of the Oregon Working Families Party in support of Senate Bill 750, the Oregon Corporate Accountability Act (OCAA).

The Oregon Working Families Party is a political party founded in Oregon in 2006. We represent 9,899 registered voters, and our affiliates represent tens of thousands more working people across the state.

We are proud to have fought together with many of you to bolster workers' rights in Oregon, such as ensuring workers are paid a living wage, have access to paid sick leave, and have the ability to predict their work schedules.

However, working people across Oregon continue to face much of the same mistreatment as they did before these policies were passed – along with experiencing other workplace issues like discrimination, sexual harassment, and wage theft – due to lack of enforcement. We have heard about workers blatantly unpaid for weeks of labor and others who faced persistent harassment from managers. Many of the workers' experiences are absolutely egregious.

BOLI staff work hard to ensure our laws are enforced, but they are stretched far too thin to effectively address every workplace issue. BOLI growth has not come close to matching Oregon's expanding workforce, which leaves many workers unprotected. In fact, in the division that enforces minimum wage, overtime, and other basic standards, there are 55,487 Oregon workers for every BOLI staff.

Though Oregon's laws should allow a private right of action against employers, this is being increasingly taken away from workers, as more than half of American workers are now forced to give up their right to legal action through forced arbitration clauses in their contracts. These employer-dictated arbitrations stack the deck against workers, as employers dictate the location, rules, and decision-makers.

Unfortunately, many companies have come to the understanding that cheating their workers is a good financial decision that comes with little to no risk of recourse. Between 2006 and 2017, wage theft in Oregon totaled more than \$45 million. That is money taken out of the pockets of working families and put into the pockets of CEOs. Without accountability, these companies are getting away with virtually anything they want.

We must immediately and substantially expand the capacity of BOLI to adequately address mistreatment of all workers. The Oregon Working Families Party wholeheartedly supports SB 750, the Oregon Corporate Accountability Act, because it would simultaneously protect workers while also contributing to BOLI's enforcement budget. With OCAA, our state could work together to address badly behaving companies, all while helping to ensure future enforcement is strengthened.

Oregon has led the country in efforts to protect and support working families. Now, we must put our enforcement where our values are by passing the Oregon Corporate Accountability Act. OWFP supports OCAA because it's time for all workers to get the protections they deserve.

Sincerely,

David Shor
Statewide Organizer
Oregon Working Families Party