



March 10, 2021

Co-Chairs Beyer and Gomberg and Members of the Committee,

We at Basic Rights Oregon are writing to express our strong support of the Bureau of Labor and Industries' budget bill, House Bill 5015. Basic Rights Oregon is a non-profit organization that advocates for the LGBTQ community. Through our statewide work to ensure all Oregonians live and work free of discrimination, we consistently look to the Bureau of Labor and Industries for its vital guidelines for both workers and employers. We fully support its budget, especially those portions that impact public engagement, civil right investigations, and technical assistance for employers.

Each month, we field between 8-12 calls or emails from LGBTQ Oregonians regarding some form of employment or health insurance discrimination. As a result, we will often refer people to the BOLI website so that they may file a complaint. Additionally, our Fair Workplace Project puts us in contact with a number of employers who have questions regarding how they can develop affirming workplaces under Oregon law, and BOLI is extremely helpful in providing guidance.

In order to keep these important state programs for workers and employers, we support the allocation in the Governor's Recommended Budget to allow BOLI to add 9 new staff to their Civil Rights Division. These roles are central to carrying out the main mission of the civil rights division and they previously have not had adequate staff to meet the demands of the agency.

We at Basic Rights Oregon view BOLI and the Civil Rights Division as one of the most important providers of state programs in Oregon, both for employers and employees seeking a fair workplace with a culture of respect for all workers.

We support the investments sought in HB 5015 and urge the Committee to approve them.

Sincerely,

Nancy Haque
Executive Director