

JEA Testimony

Chair Power, Vice Chair Wallan and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today in favor of HB2205 and to briefly tell my story.

20 years ago I was a new father looking for work. I answered an ad for a construction labor position. Everything seemed straight forward until I got the new hire paperwork. I was given a 1099 and was told I was an independent contractor. I had never heard the term before. I was told the perk was that taxes weren't taken out of my checks. Then I was given a non-compete form to sign which stated that if I quit or was fired I could not work for a competitor in the same field for 1 year.

Everything seemed to go well for the first month or so. I received my pay on time and it was close to what I had expected. But then the problems started. I would work 40+ hours a week but my pay started jumping around and was not always on time. Suddenly the contractor told me my pay was based on production and not hours worked. Then my foreman started taking credit for work I performed and my pay suffered even more. I would be picked up in the middle of a task and taken to other job sites, often to work alone. The owner tried to give me a truck in very rough shape in lieu of a paycheck saying I needed transportation and that the truck was my pay, I refused. Shortly after this incident the name of the company changed. Then the name changed again and my pay got even more erratic. I finally had enough and demanded my final paycheck, it took threats of a lawsuit to get paid. This situation caused a lot of stress as I was trying to provide for my newborn daughter and her mother and the inconsistent pay made it impossible to budget and we had times when we had to choose between having lights or food.

HB 2205 helps make sure that workers have more resources and greater remedy for this type of misclassification and wage theft going forward. The Just Enforcement Act provides an avenue for workers to partner with trusted community organizations to file suits on the state's behalf, allowing workers who fear speaking out alone and risking their jobs to have the community at their backs while they do so.

I the members of this committee to support HB2205 The Just Enforcement Act.
Give workers a voice in their workplace and increase enforcement of violations
that hurt working families.

Thank you,
Paul Philpott
NW Carpenters Union