



February 24, 2021

House Judiciary Subcommittee on Civil Law  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: House Bill 2205, The Just Enforcement Act

Chair Power, Vice-Chair Wallan, and Members of the House Subcommittee on Civil Law,

**The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Oregon strongly supports HB 2205 to give workers the power they need to enforce their civil rights at work.** The ACLU of Oregon is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to preservation and enhancement of civil liberties and civil rights, with more than 28,000 members statewide. As members of the Fair Shot For All Coalition we work with many partner organizations to ensure racial, gender, and economic justice for residents in Oregon.

Everyone deserves to be paid for a fair day's work and have their civil rights protected no matter where they work or how much they make.

While Oregon's workforce has grown in the past few decades, the state agencies charged with enforcing critical labor and civil rights protections have seen a steady decline in state funding and resources. The workload on these state agencies continues to dramatically increase as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, disastrous wildfires, and an economic crisis. Leaving agencies overwhelmed and understaffed as they work to serve the public and respond to complaints is the last place we want these agencies to be in the middle of these crises.

Workers most acutely affected by wage theft or discrimination are more likely to be womxn, immigrants, and BIPOC workers who work in low-wage, and labor intensive industries. When workers do find the courage to speak up at work, they often face retaliation from employers. During COVID-19 a national survey found that Black workers were twice as likely to have experienced or witnessed retaliation for raising COVID-19 safety related concerns in their workplace, and twice as likely as white workers to have those issues remain unresolved<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> National Employment Law Project, 2020, <https://www.nelp.org/publication/silenced-covid-19-workplace>



The Just Enforcement Act would provide workers with a voice in their workplace and create a revenue stream for state agencies to increase enforcement capacity. HB 2205 does not take power away from BOLI or OR-OSHA, instead it will provide additional capacity to ensure that serious violations are addressed.

The ACLU of Oregon urges you to support HB 2205.

Thank you,

Andrea Valderrama  
Policy Director  
ACLU of Oregon