



Jewish Federation[®]
OF GREATER PORTLAND



TO: House Committee on Business and Labor
RE: HB 2057

I write on behalf of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland and the Jewish Community Relations Council, in support of HB 2057.

The Jewish Community Relations Council is the advocacy arm of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland. The Jewish Federation is the primary philanthropic, advocacy, and organizational body of the Jewish community of Portland and SW Washington.

This priority is very much faith-based. Deuteronomy 24:14-15 says: “You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether one of your brethren or one of the aliens who is in your land within your gates. Each day you shall give him his wages, and not let the sun go down on it, for he is poor and has set his heart on it.”

As a former labor and employment attorney in private practice for more than three decades, I know it is nearly impossible for workers to recoup unpaid wages from subcontractors that are judgment-proof shell corporations. HB 2057 places the burden on the company in charge of the construction project to insure their subs are paid. It is not onerous to tell the general contractors that they need to hire responsible subcontractors with adequate bonds or resources so that the sub’s workers won’t be impoverished.

Wage theft is widespread in Oregon, and BOLI does not have the resources to address all the claims; but we hope the deterrent effect of passing this statute may put a dent in the rampant wage theft we see in the construction industry.

We hope you will seriously consider this bill and recommend its passage.

Sincerely,

Hank Kaplan
Chair, Portland Jewish Community Relations Council

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