

TO: Oregon State House Committee on Business and Labor

FR: Marcelino Rodriguez - Carpenter (Construction Worker) Portland, Oregon

ATTN: Chairman Holvey, Vice-Chairs Elmer, and Sosa et al.

RE: HB 2057

March 8, 2023

Chairman Holvey, Vice-Chairs Elmer, Sosa, and Business and Labor Committee Members:

Good morning; my name is Marcelino Rodriguez. I live in Portland, Oregon. I'm testifying before you today as a victim of wage theft in the construction industry in Albertina Kerr on Halsey in the summer of 2021 for Bridgeport interiors.

I was one of the employees with more seniority at this job site when the general contractor Doug from Pence Kelly asked me, and I quote, "Your pockets must be deep, Marcelino?" When I asked him why, he later responded, " Well, you've been here longer out of the rest of your coworkers, and this is a prevailing wage job. You should be earning about 40+ dollars. "

That's when I checked my paystub and noticed that I was only making \$20 an hour, and the other \$20 was missing from my paycheck. I was shocked, and I felt robbed. I had been working on that construction project for a while, which meant my wages were stolen several times, and sadly I was not the only one, but this was happening to others.

A small group of coworkers and I finally gathered the courage, with the fear of being fired, to ask our boss if Albertina Kerr was a prevailing wage job. He didn't answer the group's question but later asked me to see him alone in his office and confirmed that Albertina Kerr was not a prevailing wage job. Some of my other coworkers got a text from him saying it wasn't as well.

After that, the relationship and communication were broken. My boss made me feel awkward and made working for him very difficult, eventually resulting in me quitting. That's when I joined local 146, now local 503. I found out I wasn't the only one with this problem, and I had brothers and sisters from my local and locals around suffering from wage theft.

It is difficult to work as a primary household provider out of necessity to pay rent. When they steal your money, you feel incompetent, especially after long hours of labor in which your back,

knees, and feet are all in excruciating pain, and what hurts the most is them not taking your hard work into account and still having the audacity to not pay you in full.

I understand you committee members have busy schedules, and I appreciate you taking the time to read a little bit about the problem that the Oregon construction industry faces on a daily basis. This has to stop! That's all I have to say on my behalf. In your last hearing, you stated you wanted proof and numbers. Well, I am telling you that Wage Theft is real in Oregon, and it's happening; it happened to me! If there is a need for additional proof, I can provide it.

Thanks,
Marcelino Rodriguez.