

To: Oregon State House Committee and Business and Labor
FR:Trampas Simmons
RE: HB2057

03/08/2023

Good morning, Chair Holvey and members of the committee.

For the record, my name is Trampas Simmons, and I am the Labor Compliance Representative for the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters.

I appreciate the opportunity to come before you again and provide further testimony on wage theft and its negative impact on workers, high road contractors, and our communities as a whole.

Today I want to share a few real-life stories of workers impacted by wage theft. A couple of common threads you will hear in the stories I'll share is that, most often, when we engage with workers who are victims of wage theft, they do not know who they are working for, who is paying them, or if they are even being paid correctly.

Simon...a drywall hanger. We met Simon while walking through a project; he works directly across the street from the capital. When we asked Simon whom he was working for, he informed us that he worked for contractor A and also the name of another contractor. We then asked how much he was getting paid, and he told us he was making \$28.00 per hour and paid 14% to get his check cashed. That was a red flag for us, and we asked if he would be willing to call us after work. Simon explained that contractor A and contractor A would pay his labor broker. The labor broker would pay him in cash minus 14%, or the Labor Broker would write a personal check to a check cashing location. Simon would then drive to Portland, get his check cashed, and be charged a 14 % check cashing fee. When asked why he did not go to the bank to cash his check, he explained that if he did not go to the check cashing location, there would not be any work for him.

Jose is a wood framer I met when he called me and inquired how to join the Carpenters Union. I asked him to bring me a check stub and take a Journeyman Evaluation (**explain**). While he was taking the test, I noticed on his check stub that they had him listed as a laborer. I then asked what he would do daily on this project. He explained that he built and placed walls and would then build the stairs. He was wearing his bags and using power and pneumatic tools the entire time. Jose said that he had gone to the General Contractor and expressed his concern that he did not think he was being paid the correct wage, and the General Contractor stated that it was not their problem to take it up with his contractor.

In the third example, a carpenter entered our office and wanted to join the Carpenters Union. I asked who he had been working for, and he said he was working for contractor B. We asked if he had been paid for all hours worked and if he had been getting paid the correct wage. He told us that he had been getting paid correctly, but when we looked at his check stubs, we noticed that it was a prevailing wage project and that he was getting paid less than half of the Prevailing wage

for a carpenter. The reality is the worker lost wages and Contractor B made over 30 dollars an hour for each worker they called a laborer.

These are just a few examples of some of the workers we have been able to help, but there are many more that we cannot help because they are owed over 20k in back wages. On a prevailing wage project, we have seen job sites where the entire workforce has not been paid in over 2 months.