

Submitter: Chris McGhee

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On
Transportation and Economic Development

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5015

Co-Chairs Woods and Gomberg,

My name is Chris McGhee, and I reside in Roseburg, Oregon. I am writing to urge you to fully fund the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI), an agency crucial to protecting the rights of Oregon workers like myself. Additionally, I request your support for SB 946 to establish a sustainable funding source, ensuring that BOLI can assist workers when needed.

As a Union Carpenter, I depend on the employment laws enacted by this Legislature to guarantee fair treatment, timely payment, and a work environment free from discrimination and harassment.

BOLI is currently facing a crisis, with an unprecedented number of complaints and claims, while its capacity to investigate and resolve these issues is severely strained. Consequently, workers are left vulnerable, facing prolonged waits for justice when their rights are violated.

The following points highlight the urgency of this matter:

- The Wage and Hour Division has experienced a 208% increase in claims over the past year.
- BOLI has fewer staff members in 2025 than it did in the 1980s.
- Civil Rights complaints have surged by 278% in the past decade.

Long wait times are devastating for workers. If I am denied a paycheck, I cannot afford to wait months to be compensated. Delays in investigating and resolving claims could mean I am unable to pay my mortgage or afford medical care.

Many Oregonians are in similar situations, lacking a financial cushion to fall back on if their wages are stolen or withheld.

The stakes are too high for workers like me. We cannot afford to wait, and we should not have to. We deserve an enforcement agency capable of processing, investigating, and prosecuting cases thoroughly and promptly. You have the power to make this a reality.

BOLI plays a critical role in enforcing laws that protect all Oregonians. Without adequate funding, these protections are merely words on paper. I urge you to fully fund BOLI and equip this agency with the necessary tools to protect workers like myself, ensuring that justice is neither delayed nor denied for anyone in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Chris McGhee

Roseburg, Oregon