

Submitter: Brian Lemke

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, and Members of the Subcommittee on  
Transportation and Economic Development,

My name is Brian Lemke and I live in Cove Oregon. I'm writing to urge you to fully fund the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI), an agency vital to protecting the rights of Oregon workers like me and pass SB 946 to create a sustainable funding source so workers like me don't have to wonder if BOLI will be able to help us when we need it.

As a Construction Carpenter, I rely on the employment laws passed by this Legislature to ensure that I am treated fairly, paid on time, and work in an environment free from discrimination and harassment.

BOLI is in crisis – receiving more complaints and claims than ever before, while its ability to investigate and resolve these claims is stretched beyond capacity. As a result, workers are left vulnerable, knowing that when our rights are violated, we may be left waiting for months – or longer – for justice.

The Wage and Hour Division has seen a 208% increase in claims in the past year.

BOLI has less staff capacity in 2025 than it did in the 1980s.

Civil Rights complaints have risen 278% in the past decade.

Long wait times are devastating for workers. If I am denied a paycheck, I don't have the luxury of waiting for months to be made whole. Waiting months to even have my claim investigated, let alone have the money back would mean that I couldn't, Pay my mortgage, afford medical care, afford child care, and pay taxes.

Most Oregonians I know are in the same situation. They don't have a financial cushion to fall back on if their wages are stolen or withheld.

The stakes are too high for workers like me. We can't afford to wait, and we shouldn't have to. We deserve an enforcement agency that is able to process, investigate, and prosecute cases in a thorough and timely manner – and you have the power to make it so.

BOLI plays a critical role in enforcing the laws that protect all Oregonians – but without the funding to do its job, those protections are nothing more than words on paper. I urge you to fully fund BOLI and give this agency the tools it needs to protect workers like me and ensure that justice is not delayed – or denied- for anyone in Oregon.

Brian Lemke  
CARPENTER  
Cove, Oregon