

Submitter: Melvin Norman

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5015

To: Co-Chairs Woods and Gomberg
Members of the Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development

FR: Melvin Norman, Senior Representative, Carpenters Local 503

RE: Support for a fully funded BOLI, HB 5015

My name is Melvin Norman, and I writing today on behalf of Local 503, representing 4000 of workers across Oregon. Our union stands in strong support of fully funding the Bureau of Labor and Industries.

Our members are the backbone of Construction in Oregon, and they work hard to support their families, contribute to the economy, and build better communities. However, without a strong, fully funded agency to enforce labor protections, workers' rights—and everything they contribute—is at risk.

At Local 503, we've seen firsthand how disinvestment in BOLI has created an enforcement crisis. BOLI has fewer staff now than it did in the 1980s, despite significant growth in Oregon's workforce. This staffing shortage has led to unacceptable delays in investigating claims and allows wage theft, and discriminatory practices to continue unchecked.

At the same time, uncertainty at the federal level—underscores the urgency for Oregon to prioritize strong state enforcement of worker protections.

When BOLI is stretched too thin, the message is clear: worker's rights are not a priority, and bad actors can exploit their workers without consequence. We cannot allow this to continue. Oregon's workers deserve an enforcement agency that is strong enough to ensure that the laws passed by the Legislature meant to protect them actually do.

Oregon has some of the strongest worker protection laws in the country, but without BOLI's enforcement, these laws are nothing more than words on paper. BOLI needs full funding to give these protections real power, and ensure no worker is left waiting months for their rights to be enforced.

Workers deserve better. Oregon deserves better. Local 503 and our 4000+ members strongly urge you to fully fund BOLI and give the agency the resources it needs to uphold the rights of workers across the state.