



TO: Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development

FROM: Mike Selvaggio, Political Director of UFCW 555

DATE: February 25th, 2025

YES on HB 5015

Chair Woods, Chair Gomberg, and members of the committee:

In the 1980s, the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries required over 200 staff members to handle the influx of complaints, investigations, and enforcement actions that helped protect Oregon workers and the general public. Aside from enforcing civil rights violations, the agency helps ensure that laws governing employment conditions, hours, and wages are uniformly observed.

Today, Oregon's workforce has grown substantially, but BOLI's staff has shrunk to less than 150. Ideally, each investigator would be handling a maximum of 85 cases, but with the growing workforce and shrinking resources, the Wage and Hour Division is averaging more than 200 cases per investigator, representing a more than 200% increase in wage claims just from 2020-2024.

This is unacceptable, not least of all because the staff deficit has led to losses of wages to wage theft of around \$250,000,000 per year. In any other context, suffering ongoing theft of a quarter of a billion dollars each year would be perceived as an existential threat to the rule of law. We are asking that the Legislature respond appropriately by passing HB 5015.



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House Bill 5015 makes much-needed investments into BOLI staff and infrastructure. This includes additional staff and improved infrastructure to address complaint backlogs and improve efficiency, resourcing customer service and intake processes in order to allow investigators to focus on case resolution, and mediators and investigators dedicated to civil rights issues.

We often hear the cry: “We need to enforce the laws we already have on the books,” and we agree. Laws have no weight unless the Legislature is prepared to resource their enforcement. Please help to enforce these laws on the books by resourcing BOLI via HB 5015.

Thank you,

Mike Selvaggio

Political Director
UFCW 555