



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

From: Jeff Gritz, Business Manager/Secretary-Treasurer, Oregon & Southern Idaho
District Council of Laborers

RE: HB 5015, Support for a fully funded BOLI

Date: Feb 25, 2025

I am writing on behalf of LIUNA, representing over 4,000 members across the state of Oregon who work in the construction industry as Laborers as well as public sector workers serving in local governments and municipalities throughout the region. Our Union stands in staunch support of fully funding the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI). Our members are both the backbone of the construction industry in Oregon and provide vital front-line public services, working hard to support their families, contribute to the economy, and support strong communities. The work that LIUNA members perform depends on having a strong, fully funded state agency to enforce labor protections, uphold workers' rights and ensure oversight of critical standards throughout Oregon's industries and work settings.

Due to systemic underfunding for the last 40 years, BOLI is currently facing an unprecedented crisis in their inability to adequately enforce key employment laws and protect Oregonians from discrimination, harassment, and wage theft. The agency reported a **208% increase in wage claims from 2020-2024**, overwhelming its already limited capacity. These immense demands for BOLI's services have left the agency currently unable to cope with hundreds, if not thousands, of cases due to current capacity constraints.

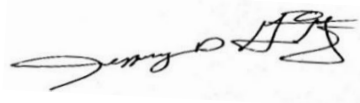
Sadly, the agency's staffing shortage has led to unacceptable delays in investigating claims and allows pernicious issues such as wage theft and discriminatory practices in workplaces to persist unchecked. We cannot allow this to continue. Oregon has some of the strongest worker protection laws in the country, but without BOLI's enforcement, we are doing a huge disservice to our Oregon workers by not being able to uphold those laws. While we should feel heartened that Oregonians feel empowered to speak up when they believe they have been wronged in the workplace, our state Labor Bureau currently cannot ensure that our state is prepared to meet their courage with action. If BOLI remains underfunded, the agency simply cannot give Oregon's strong worker protection laws the real power needed to safeguard our workers from waiting months for their rights to be enforced.

Workers deserve better. Oregon deserves better. LIUNA is an important stakeholder in the success of the Bureau of Labor & Industries as an agency. And therefore, we

believe that BOLI's budget request is critical to workers and businesses in Oregon - full funding is of vital importance to uphold the rights of workers across the state.

LIUNA members strongly urge you to support SB 5015 to provide BOLI with the resources it needs for prioritizing strong state enforcement of worker protections.

Thank you,



Jeff Gritz Business Manager/Secretary-Treasurer
Oregon & Southern Idaho District Council of Laborers