



Oregon Law Center

WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE JUSTICE FOR LOW INCOME OREGONIANS

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

From: Martha Sonato, Oregon Law Center

Re: Strong support for HB 5015

Date: 2/25/2025

Dear Co-Chair Woods, Co-Chair Gomberg, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of HB 5015, the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) Budget.

The Oregon Law Center (OLC) is a legal aid organization providing free, civil legal services to low-income Oregonians across our state. We help clients navigate divisions administered by the Bureau of Labor and Industries, including Wage and Hour and Civil Rights. We write in strong support of adequate funding of the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) budget.

Our clients face challenges in finding legal help and understanding their rights. Legal processes can be complicated, and people often need help navigating them. This is especially true for low-income Oregonians, who face significant barriers when their rights are violated. BOLI plays a critical role in helping workers understand their workplace rights and enforcing those rights when employers fail to comply with the law.

For decades, BOLI has been severely underfunded, resulting in workers waiting months—sometimes even years—to get resolution on their cases. This delay puts their financial stability and their families' well-being at risk. Without adequate funding, enforcement backlogs continue to grow, leaving workers vulnerable to exploitation without timely relief.

When BOLI is fully funded and functioning effectively, it makes a real difference for working Oregonians. It means that:

- A worker who has been denied wages can recover their hard-earned pay.
- An employee who was retaliated against for reporting unsafe conditions can be reinstated and compensated.
- A worker facing discrimination on the job can seek accountability and justice.

The Oregon Law Center's mission is to achieve justice for low-income communities in Oregon by providing a full range of the highest quality civil legal services.



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This funding is not just about policy—it is about ensuring that workers have a place to turn when their rights are violated. We urge this committee to approve the necessary funding to ensure that BOLI has the resources to protect Oregon’s workers effectively. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Martha Sonato
Legislative Advocate
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