



International Union of Operating Engineers

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JAMES ANDERSON
Business Manager & Financial Secretary

Co-Chairs Woods and Gomber, and Members of the Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic development,

I am writing to you today in full support of the continued and full funding of the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI). Thanks to the apprenticeship with the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 701 (IUOE701), I have been able to not only earn as I learn, but I have also been able to establish a lifelong family wage career that includes a full healthcare plan and secure retirement benefits which will one day allow me to retire with dignity. For myself and other registered apprentices and Journeyworkers, the BOLI has proven vital to my career due to their ability to both regulate registered apprenticeships in Oregon and enforce the prevailing wage laws that ensure I do not get taken advantage of and that at the end of the day, I get paid fairly for my dedication, time, and work.

As a member of the IUOE701, we have seen time and time again how disinvestment in the BOLI creates preventable enforcement crises. Despite continual growth in Oregon's workforce, the BOLI has far fewer staff today than it did back in the 1980s. Such a staffing shortage has led to lengthy delays in investigating claims and allows intolerable wage theft. Sadly, discriminatory labor practices continue to be rampant and often go unchecked. To make matters worse, uncertainty at the federal level further compounds the need for Oregon to urgently prioritize strong state enforcement of the invaluable protections provided daily by the Bureau of Labor and Industries.

One fact continues to be clear: when the BOLI's staff is underfunded, workers' rights are sidelined as bad faith actors across Oregon exploit their employees without penalty or consequence. Such a deficit in enforced regulations simply cannot continue. Workers in Oregon deserve an enforcement agency that is strong and adequately funded so that the labor laws passed by the Legislature are appropriately enforced for their intended purpose: to protect workers from exploitation, safety violations, and wage theft.

Oregon certainly has some of the strongest worker protection laws in the United States. But without proper enforcement and funding of the BOLI, such laws are reduced to little more than words on paper. The BOLI deserves full funding so that these protections have real enforceability, and so that no worker is left in the dark about their legal rights. Oregon Workers deserve full enforcement of the labor laws which have been written and passed. The 3,000+ members of IUOE701 strongly urge you to fully fund the BOLI and provide the agency with the resources it needs to uphold the rights of workers across all of Oregon.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter,

Nate Stokes
Assistant Business Manager
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