

Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Scharf and Munoz, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Miles Larson, and I am here on behalf of the Oregon School Employees Association, representing 25,000 classified school employees across Oregon. OSEA supports SB 4027 -1 because a strong, well-resourced Bureau of Labor and Industries is essential for the working people who keep our schools and communities running.

OSEA members are bus drivers, custodians, nutrition staff, instructional assistants, maintenance workers, and office professionals. They are the people who open the doors, keep buildings safe and clean, serve meals, support students in classrooms, and make sure kids get to and from school. When workplace rights are violated, our members need BOLI to be there with timely investigations and real enforcement. Wage theft, miscalculated overtime, denied meal and rest breaks, retaliation, and prevailing wage violations are not abstract policy issues for classified employees. They are rent money, grocery money, and the ability to keep a family stable. When BOLI is underfunded and backlogged, workers are left waiting months or years for relief, and that delay effectively rewards bad actors while responsible employers who follow the law are undercut.

This bill matters right now because the Legislature has an opportunity to prevent backsliding. Without a sustainable funding path, the positions that are currently helping drive progress, including work to reduce the wage and hour backlog, will remain vulnerable. When staff do not have stable funding behind them, they understandably look for more secure employment, and Oregon loses the trained capacity it needs to keep cases moving and provide timely service. For workers, that means longer delays and less confidence that the state can enforce basic protections. For employers who are trying to comply, it means an uneven playing field where those who cut corners gain an advantage.

OSEA members see the consequences of understaffing every day in our schools, and we do not want Oregon's labor standards enforcement to fall into the same pattern. Other states have invested more in their enforcement agencies, and Oregon workers should not be asked to wait years to have their rights on the job enforced. SB 4027 -1 is a practical step toward ensuring BOLI can sustain its workforce, keep improving timeliness, and deliver the level of service Oregonians deserve. For these reasons, OSEA respectfully urges your support for SB 4027 -1.

Thank you.



Miles Larson – OSEA Government Relations Specialist