



April 4, 2019
SB 750

Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Knopp, members of the committee,

The Oregon Coalition of Christian Voices speaks for the disadvantaged and those who often lack voices in the making of our laws.

We support SB 750 as a long overdue approach by the state to address the problem of wage theft, which we consider a fundamental moral issue. Wage theft is one of the most heinous of crimes since it targets those who are either poor or of modest income and typically unable to defend themselves.

The enforcement staff of BOLI has been cut over past decades while the economy has grown and become more complex. The result is that the agency is no longer able to fully enforce the labor laws that this legislature has passed with the expectation that they would be enforced. BOLI is effectively the police department for the state when it comes to labor laws. If any other police department had been so badly cut back in the face of continued criminal behavior the citizens of that community would be outraged and demand action.

Lack of enforcement means the legislature is not serious about white collar crime. Stealing \$500 from a gas station is treated more seriously than stealing \$5,000 or \$500,000 from employees. This needs to stop.

We hope this committee and this legislature will take a moral stand and say that stealing from employees is not okay in Oregon. For session after session workers and their supporters have pleaded with the legislature to take action. Each time the proposals have been rejected as too complex or too harmful to business.

SB 750 addresses past objections to potential solutions because it does not add new legal complexity that businesses have to deal with. It simply adds additional capacity to the current enforcement provisions by deputizing private citizens to assist in enforcement. This is an old solution from our pioneer history to help solve a modern problem.

We urge you to vote yes on SB 750.

John Calhoun