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## OREGON DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

TO: House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards

FROM: Leslie Wu, Policy Advisor to Attorney General Rayfield, Oregon Department of Justice

DATE: May 7, 2025

SUBJECT: Testimony in Support of SB 426A

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Attorney General Rayfield and the Oregon Department of Justice write in support of SB 426A to address wage theft impacting working families across Oregon. SB 426A empowers the Attorney General to accept claim assignment from impacted Oregonians whose wages have been stolen and bring civil actions in the name of the State of Oregon. Providing the Attorney General this enforcement ability is an additional tool in the toolbox to ensure that workers are paid the wages they are owed. In addition to that tool, SB 426A provides Oregonians with the power to ensure accountability in their own workplaces. Both are necessary to combat the pervasive problem of wage theft and labor trafficking in the construction industry.

Multiple options for enforcement of wage theft claims will send a strong deterrent message to bad actors in the industry. Wage theft claims have risen sharply in recent years, according to Bureau of Labor and Industries (“BOLI”) data. Since 2022, BOLI has received an average of nearly 3500 claims per year, more than doubling their average claims in the preceding seven years. Agency resources have been stretched thin, and the need for additional enforcement options is apparent.

The work of ensuring that Oregonians are paid their fair share for the work they have done is a priority of the Attorney General and would compliment other efforts of the agency. For example, the Attorney General has proposed the creation of an organized crime team that would focus in part on curbing labor trafficking.<sup>1</sup> Teams of specially trained agents will work with their local

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<sup>1</sup> [Oregon attorney general proposes statewide organized crime response teams | kgw.com](#)

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Page 2

law enforcement to meet labor trafficking at its root, leveraging the agency's expertise in working with victims from our most vulnerable immigrant communities who are disproportionately the victims of labor trafficking. While the teams would focus on criminal cases, their work in the community will enable the agency to have on-the-ground insight into where labor trafficking and wage theft is occurring.

SB 426A helps to ensure that Oregonians are paid for their hard work by enhancing and empowering wage theft enforcement efforts. We urge your support.

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