



# PRESS RELEASE

OREGON HOUSE MAJORITY

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## **Legislation Provides Construction Worker Wage Protections**

*Provides improved process to claim unpaid wages*

SALEM – The Oregon House of Representatives passed [House Bill 4154B](#) today, which would provide construction workers with additional wage theft protections.

The legislation, championed by Rep. Julie Fahey (D-West Eugene, Junction City, Bethel), would require a general contractor to pay the wages or benefits owed to a worker by a delinquent subcontractor if a specific set of conditions is met.

“The goal of this bill is to protect wages for workers in the construction industry by adding accountability for general contractors in certain specific situations,” Rep. Fahey said. “When workers aren’t paid what they have earned, it hurts workers and their families. It also hurts our local economies and reduces tax revenue.”

According to the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industry (BOLI) between 2015 and 2017, there were more than 500 wage claims for the construction industry in Oregon. In fiscal year 2016-17 alone, BOLI collected more than \$600,000 in unpaid wages for workers.

This legislation would create a new process through which the construction workers employed by subcontractors would be able to claim unpaid wages.

This legislation would require a contractor to step in to pay a claim if: a claim has been filed with BOLI for wages, overtime pay, or benefits; a claim has been investigated and found to be valid; BOLI has determined the wages or benefits are not collectable from the subcontractor; and the general contractor has not already fully paid the subcontractor any amounts owed under the contract for the project in question. If a general contractor has fully paid the subcontractor, they are not liable for unpaid wages and benefits of the subcontractor.

“My hope is that this bill will both make it easier for workers to be paid what they are owed and that it will incentivize general contractors to hire responsible subcontractors,” Rep. Fahey added. “I believe we have an obligation to ensure that we are protecting the working men and women who continue to build our state. This bill is a small step forward towards that goal.”

Oregon House Democrats are focused on ensuring every Oregonian can achieve their American dream. That is why they are working to boost small businesses and encourage living-wage job growth in every part of the state. House Democrats are also committed to advocating for working Oregonians with policies that level the playing field and protect workers.

The legislation, which passed 31 to 26, now goes to the Oregon Senate for consideration.

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