



# OREGON LEGISLATURE

Senator Betsy Johnson, District 16  
Representative Brad Witt, District 31

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Witt and Johnson Acknowledged For Their Roles in Anti-Wage Theft Law**

*HB 2977, which took effect July 1, cracks down on wage theft in construction industry*

SALEM— Earlier this month, the Oregon Coalition to Stop Wage Theft presented Senator Betsy Johnson (D-Scappoose) and Representative Brad Witt (D-Clatskanie) an award for their support of a new law to stop wage theft, which is the non-payment or underpayment of wages owed to employees.

“When wage theft happens, workers lose their ability to provide for their families. This hurts our communities, and it hurts our economy,” said Representative Brad Witt (D-Clatskanie). “I’m pleased that we took action to stop wage theft in the construction industry and to help to level the playing field for companies that provide a living wage.”

Representative Witt and Senator Johnson both supported House Bill 2977, which now requires construction labor contractors to obtain a license with the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI).

According to a recent report, the construction industry accounts for only four percent of Oregon’s workforce, and yet eighteen percent of wage and hour complaints filed with BOLI come from the construction labor sector. House Bill 2977B will address that problem by holding companies that connect workers with contractors in the construction industry to the same standards that apply to farm labor contractors.

“I’m proud to have voted for this bill, which protect workers and helps to stop wage theft in the construction industry,” Senator Betsy Johnson (D-Scappoose). “With the Governor signing the bill earlier this year, we now have more tools to ensure workers receive full payment for the hours they’ve put in on the job.”

The bill establishes licensing requirements for construction labor companies and requires these companies to apply for and obtain a license before recruiting and hiring workers for projects. Workers who are hired by a company that has not obtained a license under HB 2977B would have a cause of action to recover any unpaid wages that are due to the employee.

Governor John A. Kitzhaber signed House Bill 2977B into law on July 1, 2013, and the new law took effect on the same day.

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