



Commissioner Brad Avakian

Bureau of Labor and Industries

Press Release

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CONTACT: Bob Estabrook, 541-954-2632

Avakian to Latino Workers: BOLI Can Help

State Labor Commissioner highlights support services for workers at Centro Cultural

Portland, OR- Speaking in Cornelius last night, Oregon Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian asked Latino workers to call on the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) when they need help dealing with employers. Commissioner Avakian reminded the attentive audience at Centro Cultural that BOLI enforces wage and hour laws, including overtime and rest periods, as well as civil rights protections in employment, housing and public accommodations.

“The State of Oregon is going to protect your rights,” said the Commissioner. “If you have questions about labor laws or civil rights, call BOLI for help.”

En español: “El estado de Oregon protegerá sus derechos,” dijo Commissioner Avakian. “Si usted tiene preguntas sobre leyes laborales o derechos civiles, llame a BOLI para recibir ayuda.”

During the legislative session, BOLI fought successfully to prevent severe budget cuts in the Farm Labor Unit and Civil Rights Division, which are key law enforcement entities in this state. In addition, targeted budget restorations will mean more bilingual staff at BOLI to assist the public, from the Wage and Hour Division to the Technical Assistance for Employers Program. Inquiries from Spanish-speaking Oregonians consistently represent more than 10% of all contacts for BOLI staff; fully 25% of claims for unpaid wages in the last six months have come from Spanish-speaking claimants. The Civil Rights Division also reports increasing complaints from Hispanic employees of egregious sexual harassment, workplace safety violations and injured worker retaliation.

“BOLI’s commitment, my commitment, is to serve all the people of Oregon,” Commissioner Avakian said. “We will do everything we can to give all Oregonians access to our agency’s critical services. Especially in a time of economic struggle, BOLI will ensure that civil rights are defended, wage and hour laws enforced, apprenticeship programs strengthened, and employer assistance services available.”

The Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries is Oregon’s enforcement agency for civil rights, as well as labor and employment laws. BOLI encourages and enforces compliance with state laws relating to wages, hours, meal and rest periods and farm and child labor; protects the rights of all Oregonians to equal, non-discriminatory treatment; promotes the development of a highly skilled, competitive workforce through the apprenticeship program and partnerships with government, labor, business, and educational institutions; and advocates policies that balance the demands of the workplace and employers with the protection of workers and their families.

For more information about BOLI’s activities and mission, visit: <http://www.oregon.gov/BOLI/>

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The mission of the Bureau of Labor and Industries is to protect employment rights, advance employment opportunities, and protect access to housing and public accommodations free from discrimination.