

BUREAU OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIES (BOLI)
COMMISSIONER BRAD AVAKIAN

Commissioner's Message – February 8, 2012
All hands on deck to support hands-on learning in our schools

Dear Friends:

The legislature is back in session, holding the historic first even-year session ever required by Oregon's constitution. There remains some anxiety about the state budget and how legislators will choose to keep it in balance, but I can tell you one thing with certainty: there is plenty of revenue available to preserve the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Revitalization Grant Fund.

Last year, legislators voted unanimously to commit \$2 million to the common-sense solution to strengthening Oregon's workforce development system while leveraging private business, labor and community support for hands-on learning in public schools. I led the charge to commit that money because if Oregon is going to have a 21st Century economy, driven by a highly skilled and internationally competitive workforce, we have to commit to every Oregon student having access to high-quality CTE options that teach emerging or in-demand job skills. Our economic competitors in other countries take CTE seriously because they know it's the foundation for their future workforce.

The foundation for Oregon's workforce has been cracking for years now and the CTE grant fund is the first step to rebuilding it.

The fix isn't going to happen over night, but the energy and resources that the business and labor communities are willing to put into this effort means that a small state investment will translate into major economic gains. The legislature put us on the right path by investing in CTE in 2011, and it's vital to our state that we not backtrack by cutting the grant fund in 2012.

Schools across the state, united with partners in their communities who are ready and willing to support new or expanded CTE programs, are already planning for the 2012-13 school year. Their letters of intent have to be in by Feb. 10th. They deserve to hear that the Oregon legislature was serious in voting unanimously to invest in CTE.

Cuts to the CTE grant fund should be off the table during this historic session. If legislators backtrack on this critical issue, leaving living-wage jobs on the table and disinvesting in our economic future, we'll be talking about this session as historic in a whole other way.

Sincerely,

Brad Avakian

Labor Commissioner sides with firefighters in overtime dispute

In January, Commissioner Avakian issued a [declaratory ruling](#) taking a strong position in support of firefighters' overtime pay. The Commissioner's decision ensures that city firefighters in Grants Pass (International Association of Fire Fighters, Local 3564) will be paid overtime wages based on their total regular duty hours, including authorized vacation and sick leave.

Immediately, the ruling means the City of Grants Pass will be paying back overtime wages to its firefighters to correct up to two years of miscalculated pay. The City had argued that a more recently enacted law governing overtime for public employees generally had trumped the firefighter-specific law—an analysis which the Labor Commissioner's ruling rejected.

Looking forward, because a Labor Commissioner's determination carries legal weight in all state jurisdictions, the ruling potentially impacts other local fire departments throughout Oregon. It is not known how many jurisdictions or individual firefighters may be impacted statewide. Employers with questions about proper calculation of overtime should consult BOLI's [Technical Assistance for Employers Program](#); workers with questions should contact the state [Wage and Hour Division](#).

TONIGHT: Avakian to join jobs town hall with Rep. Dave Hunt

Special "Facebook Town Hall" to increase citizen access

Commissioner Avakian will participate in a Facebook-based town hall meeting tonight – starting at 7pm – in concert with State Rep. Dave Hunt (D-Clackamas County). Jobs and the economy will be the focus for discussion, but the Commissioner and Rep. Hunt look forward to answering your questions on the legislative session and other current topics. To pose a question, join the conversation, or just “listen” in, head to www.facebook.com/FriendsofDaveHunt or www.facebook.com/BradAvakianOregon at 7pm tonight!

The TA Tracker

Technical Assistance for Employers Program off to a fast start in 2012

TRAINING SERVICES:	BROUGHT TO THESE COUNTIES:
BOLI Technical Assistance seminars:	Lane, Marion, Multnomah
Public seminars hosted by local OECs:	Coos, Linn-Benton, Lane
Private, customized on-site trainings:	Malheur, Union, Lane
New Supervisor Seminar Series:	Multnomah
Total training days logged since Jan. 1	14.5

To learn more about TA's various services and how they can help your business, visit www.oregon.gov/BOLI/TA. We value your support!

For a printable PDF of the Commissioner's Message, [click here](#)

For more information and news from BOLI, visit us online [here](#)