

BUREAU OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIES (BOLI)
COMMISSIONER BRAD AVAKIAN

Commissioner's Message – July 7, 2011
BOLI: Protecting Workers and Employers

Dear Friends:

The legislature has wrapped up its session and BOLI is taking the briefest moment to savor three key victories for our agency and the workers and employers that we serve every day:

Revitalization of Career and Technical Education (CTE; [HB 3362](#)) – Passage of this important coalition legislation, including \$2 million to fund my signature issue—grants to help re-establish and expand CTE options for Oregon public school students—was a major accomplishment. So many advocates and legislators offered their support that I can't single out just a few for special recognition, but I appreciate the many contributions that were made in helping to pass this crucial legislation. BOLI and I will continue to be involved as the grant process rolls out, but we will also stay on the front-lines of this issue: \$2 million is a huge achievement, especially this session, but it's only the first step on the path to restoring CTE to all of Oregon's middle and high schools, which is the key to a well-rounded education for our kids and a competitive advantage for our economy.

Holding Employers Accountable for NSF Paychecks ([HB 2039](#)) – 86 of 90 state legislators said yes to this simple, elegant fix to current law which requires workers to jump extra hurdles when an employer saddles them with non-sufficient funds (NSF) paychecks. Starting January 1, Oregon workers will no longer have to hire an attorney to file in civil court to receive damages for getting a bad check from the employer that they trusted to deliver their wages on payday. This protection is important to working Oregonians, but it's also a victory for the Oregon employers who consistently comply with state employment laws—good employers should not have to compete with companies that can't be bothered to pay their workers on time.

Maintaining Key Services During the Economic Recovery ([SB 178](#), [SB 5519](#)) – As Oregon's economy gets itself back on track, it's critical to preserve the services that BOLI provides to workers and job applicants, youth and adult apprenticeship seekers, employers of all sizes and all Oregonians in housing and public accommodations. Aided by measures that save administrative costs, like BOLI's SB 178, and by the legislature's investment in BOLI above the Governor's Recommended Budget, the agency will continue to provide all of the services that Oregonians expect from us.

Given the challenges associated with the tight budget and the narrow partisan divides, a session which could have been very difficult was in fact quite successful for BOLI. But we aren't wasting any time celebrating accomplishments—read on in this newsletter for more on BOLI's current projects.

Sincerely,

Brad Avakian

The Brad Tracker

In just the last few weeks, as the legislature wound down but was still acting on BOLI priorities, Brad has:

- Been to his daughter's high school graduation, and volunteered at the all-night grad party;
- Participated in a Fair Housing Summit with HUD Assistant Secretary John Trasviña, Portland City Commissioner Nick Fish and a host of community advocates and partners;
- Spoken at the Plumbers and Steamfitters Union Apprenticeship Graduation;
- Participated in BOLI staff meetings in Portland and Eugene;
- Met with leaders of SEIU Local 503 in Salem;
- Chaired the quarterly meeting of Oregon State Apprenticeship and Training Council;
- Joined in the "Mud Run" 10K in Sherwood;
- Participated in Portland's Annual Pride Parade with his family;
- Attended the Urban League of Portland's Annual Meeting;
- Spoken at the Northwest Oregon Central Labor Council's monthly meeting;
- Attended the Washington County Democrats' Summer Picnic; and
- Participated in the Hillsboro Rotary Parade on July 4th.

Recent Changes Law Book and Employer Seminars Aboard

BOLI's Technical Assistance for Employers Program (TA) is breaking new ground in the coming months, both in terms of seminars and publications. The new offerings include:

[State Agency Seminar Series](#) (SASS) – TA is reaching out to fellow state agencies with a series of six "mini" seminars on topics critical to front-line supervisors and managers in public sector workplaces. The new seminars are a "beta test" of an expanded SASS tentatively scheduled to begin in 2012. Stay tuned to the Commissioner's Message and to www.oregon.gov/BOLI/TA for more on this project.

[An ambitious seminar schedule](#) leading up to December's Annual Employment Law Conference – In the next five months, TA staff will be conducting 21 public seminars from Lincoln City to Ontario, plus the six SASS trainings and probably up to 30 customized, on-site seminars for particular employers or employer groups. In September, a new OFLA-only, one-day intensive seminar will debut in Portland—depending on the response, it may be in your neck of the woods soon. You can learn more about [getting exactly the training that you need](#) as TA brings training opportunities to communities throughout the state.

Recent Changes in Labor and Employment Law, 2010-11 – This new compendium of legislative action—when new laws take effect and what they mean, and a list of introduced bills that were not enacted—plus notes on the impact of recent court decisions

is headed to the printer and will be available for purchase from TA by mid-July. This is an all-in-one-place, concise summary of recent developments in the laws that Oregon employers need to know and comply with. [Join TA's email list to receive notice as soon as the new book is available!](#)

Avakian Scores Win on Restoring Career and Technical Education

Legislators endorse funds, plan to expand CTE options in Oregon public schools

The Oregon Legislature has approved House Bill 3362B, Commissioner Avakian's priority legislation to reinvigorate career and technical education (CTE) in Oregon public schools. The Commissioner has spearheaded a diverse coalition of business interests, labor groups, education professionals and others to advocate for the popular proposal.

Here's what some supporters are saying of the landmark revitalization plan, co-sponsored by 59 members of the Oregon Legislature:

"We're making an important investment in Oregon's economy, here," said Representative Michael Dembrow (D-Portland). "But we're also investing in our kids. CTE programs have a proven track record of success, graduating well over 90% of their students. We're making clear that we want students all over the state to have the skills they need to access a good, living-wage job."

"This legislation makes the critical recognition that the skills that employers consistently demand for workers at all skill levels—problem-solving, creativity, analytical thinking, teamwork—can and should be taught before Oregon students leave high school," said House Republican Leader Kevin Cameron (R-Salem).

"In recent years there has been a lot of discussion about making this type of investment. This bill is the first real step in making it happen and investing in our industry's future," said Mike Salsgiver, Executive Director of the Associated General Contractors. "This is a huge opportunity for our kids and our economy, and we're proud to have been supporting the Commissioner's grant program from the beginning."

"Oregon workers are excited to support these programs and show young people the kind of enjoyable, rewarding careers that they can access without a four-year degree," noted John Mohlis, Executive-Secretary of the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council. "Commissioner Avakian's and Representative Dembrow's leadership on this issue has been invaluable."

Additional information about HB 3362B, the importance of career technical education and the coalition of supporters can be found [here](#).

The [Daily Journal of Commerce](#) recently spotlighted the importance of the Commissioner's CTE legislation.

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

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