



Commissioner Brad Avakian
Bureau of Labor and Industries

COMMISSIONER'S MESSAGE – November 23, 2009

Dear Friends:

We are approaching the official day for giving thanks, which is followed this year by a statewide closure day for state offices. I hope you enjoy observing Thanksgiving according to your preferred traditions; I will be sharing a happy time visiting with family.

This Commissioner's Message focuses on things for which BOLI is thankful, including the money we recover for Oregon's working people every year, our new Business Awards and the Annual Employment Law Conference. I am also thankful that BOLI has the good fortune, as well as the challenge, of being the agency that serves *both* Oregon's hard-working families and its businesses.

I think it's important for us to be thankful for our challenges, even though it can be difficult to see things this way. Although it's challenging to balance the interests of both employees and employers, I think BOLI is striking a good balance between these sometimes competing interests.

The key to managing this challenge in a constructive way is to keep open lines of communication with all of the interested parties on a given issue. It is also important to reach out to diverse interests to hear their general concerns, as I did last week in Clackamas County. In the morning I spoke with the North Clackamas Chamber of Commerce about the services available from our Technical Assistance for Employers Program. In the evening I met with the Democratic Party of Clackamas County and talked about the full range of responsibilities that BOLI has and the ways we serve Oregonians. Both groups asked great questions about the Labor Commissioner's role in issues like education, workforce development and civil rights.

It is essential for decision-makers to hear feedback directly from diverse sources. I want to thank both the North Clackamas Chamber and the Clackamas County Democrats (as well as the folks I spoke to from Linn, Lane, Benton and Douglas Counties this weekend) for being so welcoming and for giving me so much positive feedback on my work at BOLI. I hope to visit again soon, as part of my ongoing outreach to workers and employers in communities throughout Oregon. These trips are an important part of my commitment to represent all Oregonians as Labor Commissioner, a job whose responsibilities and challenges I am very thankful for.

Sincerely,

Brad Avakian
State Labor Commissioner

If you want to help spread the word about our work on all these important issues, encourage your friends and colleagues to [sign up for the Commissioner's Message](#).

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.

BOLI Gets Millions for Oregon Workers Again

For the second consecutive year, the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI)'s Civil Rights and Wage and Hour Divisions (CRD and WHD, respectively) have secured over \$3.4 million per year for Oregon's working people. The table below summarizes money going directly to civil rights and wage complainants—BOLI charges nothing to the Oregonians who come to us seeking help.

Civil Rights Division	FY 2009	FY 2008
Settlements & Awards	\$1.025 million	\$0.981 million
Wage and Hour Division	FY 2009	FY 2008
Wage Collections	\$1.333 million	\$1.688 million
---Includes PWR Wages	\$622,399	\$938,269
Wage Security Fund (WSF) Payouts	\$1.095 million	\$0.776 million
Wage and Hour Total	\$2.428 million	\$2.464 million
BOLI Total	\$3.453 million	\$3.445 million

CRD defends civil rights in housing and public accommodations as well as employment, so part of this amount may be related to those cases. WSF is supported by a trickle of employer payroll taxes to ensure final wages are paid to workers whose employer closes down; employers who fail to pay final wages but have the assets to pay them will be pursued by WHD to reimburse WSF.

BOLI's Really Big Show: 25th Annual Employment Law Conference

Celebrating a quarter century of bringing Oregon employers the latest and most useful information about labor and employment law, BOLI's Technical Assistance for Employers Program (TA) is pleased to present the 25th Annual Employment Law Conference. Scheduled for December 9 and 10 at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, the conference is back again with popular seminars like the Caselaw Update and Legislative Update, as well as all new seminars on current and emerging issues for which employers need to prepare.

Thinking you can't afford to attend this year's conference? Consider the return on your investment from hearing the leading legal experts in Oregon, as well as representatives from the agencies that actually enforce the laws, sharing their knowledge and experience with you in two power-packed days. [Click here](#) to view the schedule of speakers and topics for this year's conference.

We hope all of you will join us at the conference to see what we mean when we say it is the biggest bang for your training dollar! Need one more reason? You can earn continuing education credits through the Human Resources Certification Institute (approved) and the Oregon State Bar (certification pending) for attending our sessions.

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Nominations Extended for BOLI Business Leadership Awards

Commissioner Avakian has extended the deadline for nominations for the BOLI Business Leadership Awards to November 30. On extending the nomination process, he said: “We have received a number of thoughtful nominations, but we want to see more. Businesses of any size, from any part of the state, should be nominated by their colleagues, customers or neighbors.”

The BOLI Business Awards will provide distinction to a select group of businesses that go above and beyond the call of duty in supporting civil rights and equal opportunity, fair workplaces and developing Oregon’s workforce through employee training. The awards ceremony will take place on December 9 at the 25th Annual BOLI Employment Law Conference in Portland.

Nominees must currently be operating primarily within Oregon, or have headquarters in Oregon. Awards will be determined based on information provided in the nomination form, as well as the nominee’s company size and geographic location.

- What:** BOLI Business Leadership Awards
- Who:** Presented by BOLI Commissioner Brad Avakian
- When:** Nominations are due by 5pm on Monday, November 30
- Where:** Nomination forms and additional information are available at www.oregon.gov/boli/
- How:** Submit nominations by email to Commissioner.Brad.Avakian@state.or.us
Or by fax to 971-673-0762

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Upcoming BOLI Events

Date	Event Type	Location	Subject	Contact
Dec. 1	PWR Seminar	Salem—ODOT Training Center.	PWR for Contractors and Subcontractors	PWR Unit @ 971-673-0838
Dec. 2	OSATC Subcommittee	Portland State Office Bldg.	State Apprenticeship Rules and Policies Sub	ATD Staff @ 971-673-0760
Dec. 2	OSATC Subcommittee	Portland State Office Bldg.	State Apprenticeship Standards Review Sub	ATD Staff @ 971-673-0760
Dec. 8	PWR Seminar	Portland State Office Bldg.	PWR for Public Agencies	PWR Unit @ 971-673-0838
Dec. 9 & 10	25 th ANNUAL EMPLOYMENT LAW CONFERENCE	PORTLAND OREGON CONVENTION CENTER	Leave Laws, Caselaw Updates, the always popular Legislative Update and more!	TA Program @ 971-673-0825
Dec. 10	PWR Seminar	Portland State Office Bldg.	PWR for Contractors and Subcontractors	PWR Unit @ 971-673-0838
Dec. 15	TA Seminar	Portland State Office Bldg.	Wage and Hour Laws	TA Program @ 971-673-0825
Dec. 17	TA Seminar	Portland State Office Bldg.	Recordkeeping Requirements	TA Program @ 971-673-0825
Dec. 17	OSATC Meeting	NW College of Construction	State Apprenticeship Council Quarterly Mtg	ATD Staff @ 971-673-0760

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