



CITY OF BOSTON • MASSACHUSETTS

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
MARTIN J. WALSH

June 13, 2019

Representative Danielle W. Gregoire
Chair, Joint Committee on State
Administration & Regulatory Oversight
State House, Room 23
Boston, MA 02133

Senator Marc R. Pacheco
Chair, Joint Committee on State
Administration & Regulatory Oversight
State House, Room 312-B
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairwoman Gregoire, Chairman Pacheco, and Members of the Committee:

Today, I write to you in strong support of H.2723, *An Act relating to fair pay and safe workplaces*, filed by Representative Daniel Hunt. This bill proposes requiring state contracting officers to review a contractor's past compliance with all workplace laws, including health and safety standards, wage laws and civil rights laws, before awarding any new contracts.

The Federal Pay and Safe Workplaces order was created by President Barack Obama in 2014 to ensure businesses that receive federal contracts do a better job of adhering to labor and civil rights laws. Under the order, when federal agencies award contracts of more than \$500,000 to a contractor, they must check whether the company has complied with labor laws. The rule simply required that contractors disclose any violations of worker protection laws — the same way they have to disclose violations of other laws when bidding for a contract.

This transparency should be built into all government contracting. However, in yet another attack on working families, President Trump signed an executive order revoking the Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces order in 2017. This federal abdication of duty makes it all the more imperative that we take action here in the Commonwealth. Massachusetts and Boston have always been and continue to be leaders in protecting the rights of workers. Now more than ever, individual states need to stand up and reinforce government's role in protecting basic worker rights that are being stripped at the federal level. Taking this stand is not only important to the day to day lives of workers here in Massachusetts, but it also sends a national message to all those being negatively affected by federal policy. It says that the Commonwealth is a welcoming environment for workers and we will implement policies to ensure that goal.

This stance is particularly important to the work of my Office of Workforce Development (OWD). The Office of Workforce Development is an innovative agency that seeks to ensure the full participation of all Boston residents in the city's economic vitality and future. OW D funds and oversees programs that promote workforce development through education, job training, apprenticeship, financial coaching and credit building, career pathways, Adult Basic Education and ESOL programs, and meaningful youth employment. Annually, the City of Boston and

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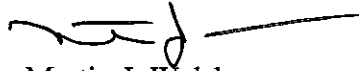


OWD channel \$14 million to 100+ nonprofits, education institutions, and employer engagement initiatives to serve working people throughout the city of Boston. OWD also manages and supports the Commonwealth's MassHire Career Centers in Boston, the two largest in the state, serving over 15,500 job-seekers and 761 employers annually.

In addition to policy development and grant-making programs that support quality jobs and career mobility for Boston residents, our OWD also champions workers' rights and safety. The Department protects workers on city contracts through the City of Boston's Living Wage Ordinance. If you are providing labor for a job contracted with the city of Boston for \$25,000 or more, you are required by law to be paid a living wage of at least \$14.82 per hour. Currently, there are 574 city procured contracts covering almost 13,500 workers. In 2014, I made wage theft a central concern of my administration. As a result of my executive order and follow-up directive, the OWD's Wage Theft & Living Wage Division was expanded to not only ensure compliance with the city's living wage laws, but also to leverage the authority of the city's procurements and licenses to ensure that employers are paying their workers lawfully.

The continued, proactive erosion of workers' and civil rights by the Trump Administration requires cities and state to step up and fill the void. To ensure the Commonwealth's leadership in protecting working people's rights and providing for responsible, transparent government contracting, I respectfully request your support of this bill and thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly or you may contact Yissel Guerrero or Alyssa Ring in the Office of Intergovernmental Relations at (617) 635-3817.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin J. Walsh', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Martin J. Walsh
Mayor, City of Boston