

Protecting Washington Workers from Wage Theft

National Study:

One in four workers has experienced being paid less than the legally required minimum wage.



Three of every four workers – **76 percent** – have experienced being denied legally required overtime wages.

Women are significantly **more likely than men** to experience minimum wage violations.

Foreign-born workers are nearly **twice** as likely as their U.S.-born counterparts to have a minimum-wage violation.

Among U.S.-born workers, African-Americans had a violation rate that's **triple** that of white counterparts.

Workers should get paid for the time they spent working.

But for thousands of workers across Washington State, that doesn't happen. When workers get cheated out of their hard-earned wages, families suffer because rent, food, and car payments don't take a holiday.

The status quo is failing thousands of Washington workers:

- The present system favors unscrupulous employers because it is slow and leaves many victims of wage theft with uncollectable judgments.
- Unscrupulous employers can hide assets or disappear, making it nearly impossible for average workers to track down the wages they are owed.

Washington State needs a fair, uniform system that prioritizes the prompt recovery of unpaid wages to keep working families strong and stable.

The **Washington Wage Recovery Act** gives vulnerable workers access to known assets to allow for prompt and fair recovery of their wages. This bill allows them to put a temporary hold on known employer assets as soon as the wage theft happens – the best possible time to secure those assets.

This temporary hold on assets—also called a “lien”—has been used very effectively by a few, specific kinds of workers, including construction workers. *Why should other workers be excluded from this solution to get paid?*

The Act levels the playing field. For over 100 years, Washington has given construction workers the tools to get them paid promptly. If a construction worker isn't paid, that worker can use the building's assets to get paid. The same should be true for all workers in our state.