

**Stop Wage Theft, Support the Illinois Wage Lien Act (HB4324)**  
 sponsored by IL State Representative Emanuel "Chris" Welch (7th District)

Problems	Current law	Wage Lien Act
<p><b>Employers that commit wage theft in Illinois know that they are unlikely to face any real consequences.</b></p>	<p>To recover stolen wages, a worker can file a claim in court or with a government agency. Then the worker has to wait for the court or agency to determine they are owed the wages they claim.</p>	<p>As soon as a worker experiences wage theft, they can secure a lien for unpaid wages on their employer's property. The Illinois Department of Labor can also secure a lien for a worker who files a claim. Employers get five-day notice and can avoid a lien by obtaining insurance or a surety bond.</p>
<p><b>Only a fraction of workers who experience wage theft recover their stolen wages within a year.</b></p>	<p>The legal process can take one to three years. While they wait, workers struggle to make ends meet, while abusive employers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Use workers like credit cards to pay wages months late,</li> <li>&gt; Convince struggling workers to settle for less than what they are owed, or</li> <li>&gt; Avoid paying wages owed altogether by transferring money and property to family or third parties, closing their business, or filing for bankruptcy.</li> </ul>	<p>A lien remains on an employer's property until the worker's claim is resolved, which motivates many employers to resolve these claims more quickly. If a court or agency determines that a worker is not owed the wages claimed or otherwise dismisses their case, the lien is removed.</p>
<p><b>Even when workers win their wage theft cases, they are frequently unable to collect the debt from their employers.</b></p>	<p>Once the agency or court makes its determination, the worker or Attorney General can try to collect the debt from the employer. However, by this point, too often it is impossible to collect the debt, because the employer transferred their money or property, closed their business, or filed for bankruptcy.</p>	<p>For recalcitrant employers, liens secure workers' interest in employers' property when they transfer it or enter bankruptcy. The liens have no impact otherwise on employers' ability to use their property.</p>