

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE OREGON STATE SENATE AND HOUSE IN SUPPORT
OF SENATE BILL 610 and HOUSE BILL 2009

BY RAMON RAMIREZ, PRESIDENT OF PINEROS Y CAMPESINOS UNIDOS DEL
NOROESTE (NORTHWEST TREEPLANTERS AND FARMWORKERS UNITED)

April 13, 2015

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today. My name is Ramon Ramirez, I am speaking on behalf of the membership of Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (Northwest Treeplanters and Farmworkers United). PCUN is Oregon's union of farm workers, nursery, and reforestation workers, and Oregon's largest Latino organization. Founded in 1985 by 80 farm workers, PCUN today includes more than 6,500 registered members.

I am here today to strongly support Senate Bill 610 and House Bill 2009 [that](#) would raise the minimum wage in the State of Oregon.

Farmworkers are America's lowest paid workers, averaging \$9,000 for seasonal workers and \$14,000 for full-time workers. Most farmworkers live in substandard housing and only receive a wage for their hard labor. The majority of farmworkers earn no benefits.

Farmworker's are the backbone of Oregon's 6 billion agriculture industries and contribute greatly to Oregon's economic prosperity. Farmworkers have been executed from every major worker rights laws including the National Labor Relations Act of 1935. As the Oregon Economic recovery continues, farmworkers need to earn a living wage so that we can provide for our families.

In the State of Oregon the majority of farmworkers are currently covered in the current minimum law. It's important to note that the majority of Oregon's voters, voted to include farmworkers in the states' minimum wage law. While it is not a living wage, farmworkers must continue to make the minimum wage as well as all other workers who work in Oregon.

We strongly oppose any attempts to excluded farmworkers from a minimum wage increase **Farmworkers are the workforce that needs the most protections and benefits not exclusion.** We must correct the historical inequities farmworkers have endured over the years.

PCUN strongly urges passage of SB 610 and HB 2009.

