



Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste

Northwest Treeplanters and Farmerworkers United

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Testimony of Ramon Ramirez, President of Piñeros y Campesinos del Noroeste, PCUN in favor of HB 3087, The Family And Medical Leave Insurance Act.

March 23, 2017

Chair Lively and members of the House Early Childhood and Family Supports Committee.

On behalf of the 6,543 members of PCUN, I express our full support for HB 3087, the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Act. PCUN is Oregon's Farmworker Union. We work to improve the working and living condition of Oregon's agricultural workers.

PCUN supports the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Act because we believe this will benefit farmworkers and their family. Farmworkers are Oregon's lowest paid workers. According to the most recent report published by the U.S. Department of Labor farmworkers earn \$7.25 per hour on average. Annually, the average income of crop workers is between \$10,000 to \$12,499 for individuals and \$15,000 to \$17,499 for a family. To give you an idea, the federal poverty line is \$10,830 for an individual or \$22,050 for a family of four. In addition US Department of Labor, states that agriculture remains one of the most dangerous jobs in the United States.

Workers in low paying jobs are the least likely to have access to the paid family and medical leave. They are also the most likely to take on the care of an ill relative to avoid the cost of other forms of care.

Farmworkers have 25% more cancer rate than the general population, the life expediency is 49 years of age compared to 78 years of age for the general population. Farmworker suffer from a greater percentage of back problems, arthritis, vision problem and a host of other health issues.

Expanding paid leave will have economy-wide benefits such as reduced government spending on public assistance due to decreased economic instability for families. It has also been shown to positively impact labor force participation, because it makes time for important family care demands that often push employees out of the paid workforce. Higher employment and greater family economic stability equates to economy-wide gains - generating a larger tax base and increased consumer spending.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 3087, the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Act. **We urge a yes vote.**