

Dear Committee members,

My name Karl Dettwyler and I am a third-generation farmer in Oregon. I raise Grass seed, Green beans, Hazelnuts and Blueberries. Besides family we have two full time employees that have worked for us for over twenty years, we also employ a few seasonal employees and work with a labor contractor for additional help. I want to share with you my concerns about the real impacts of HB 2358 and SB 616 on both my farm and my employees.

I am very concerned that this policy has not been well-vetted and will harm those it intends to help. Farming has many tasks that require different hours depending on the weather. Our full-time employees have understood this for years, as the old saying goes (when the sun shines make hay). When the weather is nice, and the fields are not muddy we will a lot of times exceed 8 hours to try and get the job done while the conditions are correct. If it is pouring down rain, we will try to find things to do to keep busy and maybe not work a full day because of the weather. Our business is also seasonal, and it requires a lot of hours and dedication during planting and harvest. Our business can not just be turned on or off by the punching of a timecard. Most employees I have worked with enjoy the work and understand this.

As per our farm if this shall pass our employees will have less opportunity to earn extra money as I am a price taker, which means that I cannot simply increase the sale price of my crops to account for added labor costs. Consumers set our prices and will buy from other states or countries that sell at a cheaper price. I will have to absorb any added overhead. This will drive me to add employees and limit the current ones to 40 hours or less. As I keep dealing with increases in labor cost it requires me to consider mechanization and or changing to less labor-intensive crops That is the economic reality I deal with every day.

As a family farm business, we can only cut into our already low margin so far, considering we keep seeing all our input costs rising. I know it is not the goal of these bills to reduce employee take-home pay, but HB 2358 and SB 616 demand wages that are not possible with the economics of agriculture and will result in reduced pay and hours for farm employees.

Thanks