

March 5th, 2021

To: House Committee on Business and Labor
From: Gordy Webster- J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co- Boring, OR
RE: House Bill 2358 / Senate Bill 616 – Agricultural Overtime

Chair Paul Holvey-

My name is Gordy Webster and I'm a 4th generation nurseryman. My family owns and operates J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co. Nursery located in Boring, OR. We are the largest deciduous shade, flowering and ornamental tree grower in the state. We employ around 500 of the finest tree growers in the country. We urge you to oppose House Bill 2358 and Senate Bill 616.

House Bill 2356 and Senate Bill 616 will have a devastating impact on the profitability of our business. Many of the nurseries in Oregon are still struggling to get our feet back under us since the terrible recession in 2010. Only in the last couple years have we been able to start growing our businesses and investing in more employees and infrastructure. This bill would bring that to a halt.

I'm sure the intent in this bill was good. More money to the people who need it the most. This is the simple minded thinking of the liberal left. I get it. The problem is that liberals never think it all the way through. By passing HB 2358 and SB 616, you will put LESS money in the pockets of the people who need it the most. You see, we are simple farmers. We grow crops and our workload is dictated by the weather. When the weather says work, we work. When the weather stays stay home, we stay home. If this bill is passed, when the weather says work, we will be forced to stop our employees after 40 hours and hire some cheaper contract labor to fill in the void. This will cause our employees the added stress of searching for other part time work to get more hours in the week. We would rather have them work for us and make a good living doing so.

We cannot absorb this increased cost and operate our business. Prices are already as high as possible. Profit margins are already tight due to competition in other states. Nobody who employs large numbers of employees in ag are making big profits. Labor costs are simply rising at a rate which far out passes price increases. This increase in business expense will have to be passed onto our employees. This will be a huge hit to the Latino community. I can never figure out how the left continues to call themselves "champions" for the minority groups and continues pass bills like this that hurts those same groups. Since the term racism is thrown around so freely lately, I can't help but think this bill and the people who support it have ill intent to the Latino community.

I hope you re-consider the consequences of your actions and oppose House Bill 2356 and Senate Bill 616.

Sincerely,

Gordy Webster
J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co