

I am writing to voice my support for paying agricultural workers overtime for hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week. Agriculture workers are the backbone of this state and country. They are arguably the most essential workers in our community and have the least protections afforded to them. The overtime exemption law is rooted in racism and affects people of color at an inequitable rate. Besides not being paid on the same basis as every other American, working 60 hour weeks is grueling. A lot of these workers drive a considerable distance, and routinely spend 12 hours away from home on a work day. This means less time spent with family, providing for children, and time spent on ones self. By having a six day workweek, they also cut the time available on weekends to spend with family in half.

I realize the business implications of this are very significant. California has adopted a similar measure, but chose to gradually scale down the overtime exemption from 60 hours to 40 hours over a four year period. There are countless options to explore, but this idea needs to be shown the respect that it deserves and the dialogue needs to happen to come to an equitable solution.