

Victor H. Garcia Muñoz
In Support of HB 2358
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I want to show my total support for HB 2358 because agricultural workers, like any other worker who contributes to this country's economy, should be compensated correctly for the amount of hours they work. It is very concerning to me that there isn't a moral ground established regarding this matter because one would imagine that every moral being would deem it common sense for agricultural workers, who partake in very physically demanding work, to not be exempt from receiving overtime pay. It is of no astonishment that agricultural workers are forced to work under sabotaging conditions, risking their lives while on the clock, to provide for their families and themselves; through wildfires, winter storms, and through a recent pandemic many agricultural workers are still forced to submit to physical labor for the sake of survival. Not only does this prove their loyalty to the labor in which they partake, but it should also deem them worthy, in the eyes of employers and the public at large, to receive overtime pay which is a meager handout compared to the amount of compensation they truly deserve for their contribution to our economy and our country.

For too many years agricultural workers have been excluded from receiving overtime pay under the Federal Standards Act (FLSA) passed in 1938. Now, let's not forget that FLSA was rooted in racist ideologies in efforts to compromise with southern legislators to prevent farm workers, who at the time were majority African-American and Black, from having the right to collective bargain which savagely snatched away the opportunity for them to demand humane working conditions. The question that rises and that must be considered by opposing individuals is the following: do we solely want to continue upholding racist practices that serve no other purpose but to maliciously oppress other humans and deprive them of their basic human rights?

Just as important, it must be made clear that opposing views do exist, but they all fail to prioritize farm workers and their health. Instead, they solely focus on the implications that this bill will have on their finances. It is evident that agricultural workers are not held with integrity in the eyes of these views because they do not even make the slight effort to indulge in thinking of ways to compromise and find solutions that put the workers and their health first, before their finances. Juggling the lives of people with financial gain should never be a practice that any employer should have to face in order to ensure the success of their business. Instead of penalizing the agricultural workers for matters concerning our economy, why don't we aid our agricultural employers with the proper resources to ensure their employees are being paid fairly? If we were only a little more meticulous in the way we came up with solutions for such problems, we would be living in a country where all our workers are being paid justly and all our employers are being supported by our government to pave the way for a strong economy free of discrimination and selfish decisions.