

Dear Representative,

I am a 6th generation farmer here in Oregon, farming with my father and brother. We farm year round keeping our blueberries growing and healthy. Our harvest season only lasts 8-12 weeks, and that's if the summer heat or the early rains don't take out our crop. I employ 15 employees year round and 150 to 200 seasonal employees, many of whom come back to my farm year after year. I would like to share with you my concerns about the real impacts of HB 2358 on both my farm and my employees.

As a farmer, 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 purchases 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 into an already tight budget. That's the economic reality I deal with every day.

My pickers being paid on piece rate average \$18 to \$20 per hour picking, my top pickers average \$25 to \$30 per hour. Most of my hourly employees are above minimal wage. The employees at minimum wage are first year, first job ever employees. All of my full-time employees get a year end bonus. We also give a small harvest bonus to the hourly seasonal workers.

I will not be able to afford the added payroll costs proposed in HB 2358, as I have calculated it to cost me at least \$350,000 in new labor costs. To stay in business, I will be forced to limit the number of hours worked by my employees to 40 hours in a week to avoid the added expense of overtime pay. I do not want to do this, and my employees do not want me to do this as it will take money out of working families pockets, and that is the practical reality of bills like HB 2358.

Hand picked fresh fruit is the best quality you can find on the market and with this bill I will be competing with Michigan, New Jersey, North Carolina and British Columbia, Canada which all have lower wages than Oregon. These states also do not have overtime. British Columbia, Canada does have overtime which begins after 48 hours.

The blueberry industry has been in bear markets for about 10 years. I have seen 2 of my blueberry growing neighbors exit the blueberry industry. My last blueberry growing neighbor is holding on by threads just like me.

I would ask every representative in support of this bill to you to ask yourselves "Am I ready to kill family farms in Oregon, and hurt the farm workers of Oregon?" That's the reality of this bill for me on our family farm!

Thank you!

Anne Kraemer-Steinkamp
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