

Good morning I was in yesterday's meeting waiting to testify and didn't have an opportunity, so I hope this will be read. The bill has good intentions of trying to help people but I fear the ones who have introduced it are too far detached from agriculture to understand the impacts it will have on the people they are trying to help. We farm and also operate a packing facility on the farm. We don't pay over time as stated, the labor is hard, but we are right there with our employees doing the same labor as they are and often for longer periods of time. This isn't said to diminish what they do, but to let everyone understand we know the work and how important our employees are. My employees aren't paid overtime and I also am not paid overtime. With the increases in wages over the past few years my employees have all had wage increases. Ag commodity prices have not followed suit. Over the same period I have taken less and less home to keep the farm in business.

Farming income cycles and there are times things are great and there are times when there is less and we as owners take home less. This is a choice we have made and I feel my employees have made the same choice to work in ag where overtime is not paid. I have had employees leave in the past to take other jobs in places such as Walmart, construction, landscaping, and other various work places. Overtime is paid after 40 hours, yet over half come back to the ag to get more hours because these businesses will limit their hours. They must look for a second job to make the same pay as they were making on the farm. This leaves them less time to spend with family because of the increased time in traveling for their new first job to their new second job just to make the same pay they were receiving on the farm. As these employees have found, they have choices and they are not bound to only work in ag but, most of them are like me and love what they do and don't want to work in other places. They choose where they work and most ask me for more hours and I have to tell them to go home and spend time with their families. They often say, we have more time in the winter to spend with them and now is the time we need to work.

In our packing shed, we do pay over time to our employees, only receiving 40 hours a week of work on most average packing times. Our packing shed operates from August until mid April most years. Planting time comes in our area about the first week in March. During this peak farming time, my seasonal employees leave me because they want to go to the farms where they can get more hours. With HB 2358, the farmers will be adapting new practices that will not be giving over 40 hours a week so now these workers will be looking for a second farm to work on so they can maintain their past wage amount. In other areas there will be lost jobs where robots can replace the workers due to the increased price in labor. This is the same in any industry as the labor prices increase we have seen self checkout increase, kiosks at fast food restaurants and so on. So please slow down and let's take the time needed to not hurt those how this bill is intended to help.

Yesterday you heard from many 3rd and 4th generation operators. They are here because they were handed everything, they are here because they have adapted and changed to the needs of the times. The farms will all not all be going broke from this bill, but a few will. Don't get me wrong, but the people you are trying to help will be the ones losing pay and possibly their jobs to robots that work the fields or pivots that water the crops and are controlled by phones, and tractors that drive themselves. These aren't nice ideas, however; these are all possible options the bankers has told us to consider into if this bill is passes Thank you.