



# Local 7901

AFL-CIO

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**Chair Holvey, Vice-Chairs Bonham and Grayber,  
and Members of the House Business and Labor Committee,**

March 8th, 2021

My name is A.J. Mendoza, and I serve as the elected president of the Communications Workers of America Local 7901. Our Union represents nearly 700 members across Oregon and Southwest Washington at telecommunications companies, labor organizations, 501(c)3 nonprofits, and banks - and I am writing in my capacity as a Representative of the Union to voice CWA Local 7901's strong support for HB 2358.

HB 2358 guarantees the protection of overtime pay to farmworkers who work in excess of 40 hours in a workweek - protection that the majority of workers in the US have enjoyed since the early part of the 20th century. Oregon should lead the way on workers' rights - and right now we are not. Oregon must follow the leadership of states like Hawaii, California, Washington, New York, and Minnesota by guaranteeing a measure of overtime pay for agricultural workers - and lead again.

CWA Local 7901 notes with regret the racism that dominated the American Labor movement when decisions to exclude farmworkers from the overwhelming majority of US Labor Law were made. It must be said and accounted for that those decisions represent some of the most despicable and shameful moments of our shared past, and our Union endeavors to remember that - no matter what manifestation it may appear in - racism is a true enemy of the working class. Farmworkers are essential workers - not disposable ones- and HB 2358 is an opportunity to do right by a historically undervalued part of Oregon's workforce who have continued to work despite a year that has made them endure a pandemic, smoke filled skies from the wildfires, and a severe freezing rain storm that left thousands without power.

It is a moral imperative for organized Labor to speak out whenever workers are being exploited because an injury to one is an injury to all. The horrific extent of the exploitation suffered by farmworkers in the status quo is made plain in the drastically higher rates of specific health problems (including diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and cancer) that they experience when compared to other working Oregonians - this disparity has no excuse.

CWA Local 7901 affirms that all Labor has dignity and inherent value - and we urge you to vote yes on HB 2358.

Respectfully,

**A.J. Mendoza**  
**(He/Him)**  
**CWA Local 7901**  
**president**