

3/28/21

Dear Representatives,

My name is Jim Fischer. I am a winemaker living in Portland, Oregon.

I am writing today in support of HB2358.

As a person that is engaged in the growing of grapes and processing of said fruit into wine, I am directly involved with farm laborers and employees. I have become friends with the people I have worked with at different farms and vineyards over the years. The majority of these people are immigrants from Mexico. Most of them have spent a large portion of their lives in the US - putting down roots, raising families, paying taxes. It is my belief that the exclusion of these community members from overtime eligibility is a form of codified racism - it is immoral and should end immediately.

All people should be allowed to work without fear of exploitation. Overtime rules exist to limit individuals from being overworked. To allow agricultural laborers to exist without the protection of overtime pay devalues them as people and devalues the importance of the work they do.

Some farmers/employers might tell you that they cannot afford to pay they workers overtime. I would hope that you can see through this (very old) argument. If you cannot afford to operate without exploiting cheap labor, then your business model is flawed and your moral compass is askew.

Please support our farm workers. The work they do supports all of us. Vote YES on HB2358!

Sincerely,  
Jim Fischer  
Portland, OR 97210