



March 29, 2021

Testimony in Support of House Bill 2358
Extending overtime pay for farmworkers in Oregon
Submitted by Chloe Becker on behalf of Family Forward Oregon

Chair Holvey and members of the House Committee on Business and Labor,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2358, which would extend overtime pay to Oregon's essential farmworkers. Family Forward Oregon is committed to advancing policies that support families and help them succeed, both in the workplace and at home. We work to ensure that Oregon is a place where all families can be economically secure and have the time they need to take care of each other.

There are approximately 174,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Oregon.¹ Despite the pandemic shedding light on the vital and essential role farmworkers play in our economy and food supply, farmworkers are excluded from overtime pay and other workplace protections. Additionally, farmworkers are some of the lowest paid workers: on average, farmworkers make an estimated \$25,000 per year and cannot afford to miss a day of work, even if it puts their health at risk.²

It is important to recognize the racist origins of farmworkers' exclusion from basic labor protections that many of us take for granted today. The exclusion of agricultural and domestic employees from basic federal protections was well-understood as a race-neutral proxy for excluding Black people from statutory benefits and protections made available to most white people.³ With HB 2358, we can correct this long-standing injustice.

HB 2358 would extend 1.5x overtime pay to farmworkers after 40 hours in a workweek, improving and providing economic security for families in our state. This change would follow the lead of our neighbors California and Washington, as well as New York.

2020 brought a pandemic, a catastrophic fire season, and hazardous air quality-- through all of these events, farmworkers in Oregon kept working to keep food on our tables. **We urge your support of HB 2358 to extend overtime pay to these essential workers.**

¹ Oregon Health Authority, Vital Role of Migrants in the State Economy, <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/HPA/HP-PCO/Pages/Migrant-Health.aspx>

² Hernandez and Gabbard, 36, <https://www.ucsusd.edu/sites/default/files/2019-12/farmworkers-at-risk-report-2019-web.pdf>

³ <https://lawcommons.luc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1150&context=facpubs>