



March 30, 2021

Re: Yes, on HB 2358, Farmworker Overtime

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

My name is Bridget Cooke, and I am the Executive Director at Adelante Mujeres a nonprofit organization in Forest Grove. Adelante Mujeres' mission is to provide holistic education and empowerment opportunities to low-income Latina women and their families to ensure full participation and active leadership in the community. We served over 10,000 individuals in 2020 with comprehensive, life-changing services. I am writing in support of HB 2358, farmworker overtime.

HB 2358 guarantees overtime pay to agricultural workers after 40 hours in a workweek at one and one-half times the employee's regular rate of pay. This includes farmworkers who are paid by piece-rate (how much they pick) or hourly. Oregon would join five other states (California, Washington, New York, Minnesota, and Hawaii) with some sort of overtime pay for agricultural workers. It is time for Oregon to do the same. Another crucial aspect of this proposal is that it puts an end to the racist exclusion of farmworkers from the Federal Labor Standards Act.

This bill is important to Adelante Mujeres because many of our program participants are farm workers in the Washington County area. Those who say it will disadvantage workers, are forgetting what the root problem really is. This is about racial justice, this is about affording farmworkers the same rights as other workers in our communities, this is about ending a Jim Crow exclusionary law in our state.

Farmworkers are frontline workers who continue to show up despite facing a pandemic, wildfires, and more recently, a winter storm. Agricultural workers deserve to be paid fairly for their labor. Another reason why we support this bill is because most farmworkers and their families do not have healthcare coverage through their employer. As a result, migrant and seasonal farmworkers experience higher rates of specific health problems such as diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and cancer than most other Oregonians.

HB 2358 would create economic stability for a class of workers who have been excluded from basic labor standards such as minimum wage, collective bargaining rights, and OT pay. With better wages, there will also be an increase in consumer spending, especially in local businesses and rural communities.

I urge you to vote yes on HB 2358 to ensure farmworkers in Oregon are adequately paid for their labor.

Sincerely,

Bridget Cooke  
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