

February 1, 2022

Chair Paul Holvey, Vice Chair Daniel Bonham, Vice Chair Dacia Grayber and Committee Members:

I am writing as a member of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) of Oregon, Ashland Branch, where I serve as a member of the Public Policy Committee. I want to express my strong **support** for **House Bill 4002**.

This legislation requires that agricultural workers in the State of Oregon be paid overtime when overtime is due. Overtime laws exist because there are risks of injury and wear and tear to workers if they work past a reasonable limit. People's lives should include time for rest, family and off-the-job needs, in addition to work earning a living.

Farmworkers are recognized as "essential" workers but are instead treated as second-class workers. Agricultural work is one of the most physically demanding and exhausting jobs, and has even resulted in death. Farmworkers are one of the lowest paid workers in the country, earning a total income of about \$15,000 to \$17,499 a year for individuals and \$20,000 to \$24,999 a year for a family.

This legislation seeks to rectify a wrong that's been allowed to continue for too long. The federal Fair Labor Standards Act does not require overtime to be paid to farmworkers. **Farm workers were excluded from the federal Fair Labor Standards Act as part of the shameful legacy of racism** that initially targeted African Americans who were farmworkers in the 1930's and now targets farmworkers who are immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean. (History shows that in order to get the Fair Labor Standards Act passed, President Franklin Roosevelt had to cut a deal with Southern senators and congressmen by exempting farm and domestic workers from coverage.)

As a citizen of the State of Oregon, I am very uncomfortable condoning this inequity and want this unfair practice to end. I urge you to **vote yes on House Bill 4002**.

Thank you.

Lisa Verner

Lisa Verner, FAICP
Member, Public Policy Committee
AAUW Oregon, Ashland Branch