

Date: 2/5/22

To: House Committee on Business and Labor

From: Avery Burstein

Re: Support for Farmworker Overtime,

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

My name is Avery Burstein, and I live in Salem and attend Willamette University. I am writing to you today in support of HB 4002 the Farmworker Overtime Bill. This Bill would end the racist exclusion of farmworkers from overtime as introduced in the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act. At the time in order to appease Southern Democrats farm and domestic workers who were overwhelmingly Black were excluded from this Act. Oregon itself has a checkered past and present of racism. Living across from the State Capitol I am aware of the presence of Proud Boys, an SPLC designated hate group, on your steps. Oregon has a long way to go in creating an equitable and safe state for all its citizens. Passing this bill would be a meaningful step towards this goal. Farmworkers deserve to be paid 1.5x pay after working 40 hours.

I personally care about this bill for many reasons. I am originally from the Central Valley in California which as you know is an agricultural hub. I have seen the impacts of long work hours on people in my community. Many parents of children I went to school with were farmworkers and worked incredibly hard to make ends meet to support their families. According to the National Agricultural Workers Survey, individual farm workers earn \$15,000 to \$17, 499 a year and families are estimated to make between \$20,000 and \$25,000 a year. For many of us we can't imagine living on this amount of money while supporting a family. Not to mention that farmworkers do not receive health or retirement benefits. Farmworkers not only deal with financial stress but physical stress as well. Working during heat waves, wildfire smoke, a global pandemic and in proximity to toxic chemicals such as pesticides. Putting their health and body on the line to ensure that Oregonians have food on the table. During peak harvest times workers spend as many as 16 hours on the job. These consequences are felt by the whole family, parents can have as little as 1 hour of family time a week.

Farmworkers know their worth- they know that they deserve fair compensation like any other worker in this state. With California and Washington passing overtime bills I find it likely that if this bill is not passed workers will move to those states. This is why I also urge you to remove the five year transition period time from the bill, overtime has been withheld for far too long already. I also believe that a tax credit which covers 50% of overtime pay for growers is sufficient support to implement overtime pay without the 5 year transition period.

Please join me in supporting HB 4002 by voting yes and supporting the 174,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers, and related family members, that contribute to Oregon's multi-billion dollar agricultural industry.

Sincerely

Avery Burstein

Willamette University Salem Oregon.