

Submitter: Janice Flegel

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB4002

Thank you Business and Labor Committee for reading and considering my testimony. I farm in Central Oregon with my family. We hire workers and mainly students earning wages to further their education. We also have hired migrant workers to help with planting and weeding. I also as a young person worked on a farm to earn money. From my experience as a worker and with the workers we have employed we all wanted to be able to work as much as possible because as the saying goes you got to make hay while the sun shines. There are a limited amount or hours to work on these jobs and we want to get as many of those hours as possible. By imposing a 40 hour work week and being stringent that any hours over that will be at time and a half you will be hurting workers like me. It may seem strange to you as I know you are just trying to help us workers, but; you will be harming the ability for a lot of migrant workers to make the money they have come to depend on as some we have hired in the past work as many hours as they can during the peak season of farming in our area and move on to other areas of the US and then went back to Mexico in the winter. This bill encourages many workers to not even come to Oregon to work. You are also imposing on farmers the inability to afford to pay these workers the money they have grown accustomed to making as we will have to try and get additional workers to cover the over time hours that would have been covered under the current exemption.

As an employer we value our workers, we have many who worked for us in years past that are still good friends. We worked together in the fields. If our workers needed to be off at a certain time for meetings they wanted to attend we would stop so they could make those meetings. Maybe they needed to start work earlier in the morning or later to make sure their kids made it on the school bus or that they wanted to get extra time in so they could get the job done so they could move on to another farm. We would work with them and even today as some of us live in the same community we greet each other and hug even though the communication barrier is hard we can still embrace.

I have been on both sides of this issue as employer and as worker; please work with the ag community to make this workable for both sides. This bill doesn't help either the employer or the workers. In fact the people that will be hurt the most are the disadvantaged migrant workers.

Thank you for reading and considering this testimony.