

Submitter: Derry Breeden  
On Behalf Of: Small family farms  
Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor  
Measure: HB4002

Dear Chair Holvey and members of the House Business & Labor Committee,

HB4002 is pro mega-farm and anti family-farm:

Giant Ag corporations love HB4002, because it will squeeze out small family farms. HB4002 is a death sentence to small farms, because small family farms cannot afford overtime pay. Small farms, known as family farms, operate on credit from the banks. Family farms don't own the land they farm, the bank owns the land. Family farms don't own the equipment they use to farm, the bank owns the equipment. Family farms don't pay workers with savings; workers are paid with operation loans from their bank. Family farms operate with small margins and with little profit. The little profit that is generated is used to pay interest to the banks and put food on the table. A dramatic increase to this system, such as a huge increase in expenses (ie. overtime pay) would cause family farms to go into default with their bank. A shift to include Ag overtime pay disrupts the formula and will kill family farms. This will cause the rise and monopoly of giant Ag conglomerate corporations, known as mega-farms.

Support your local farmer:

Do you like to "buy local" produce? HB4002 will eliminate that option. HB4002 will result in produce being exclusively available from your giant corporate chain supermarkets with produce brought in from giant Ag conglomerate corporations. HB4002 will squeeze out our local farmers and the void will be filled with giant mega-farms, who do not care about their labor force. HB4002 will bring in a new era of Ag industry monopoly by the big mega-farms.

The racist truth:

The big mega-farms prey on the undocumented labor population. By using farm labor contractors as a buffer, mega-farms hire undocumented laborers to meet their labor needs. It does not matter how much these mega farms pay their employees, because the farm labor contractors take up to 50% of each individual's salary. If the intent of HB4002 is to help the individual farm worker, then the bill should focus on the practices of farm labor contractors. That is to say, mandating Ag overtime will only result in making farm labor contractors richer, because the increase in an individual's salary will continue to be syphoned off by the farm labor contractors.

A reasonable conclusion:

First and foremost, there is a reason farm labor was excluded from the original overtime bill. If you don't know why, then you are walking into HB4002 blind. Congress excluded Ag from overtime, because doing so protects local small farms

and prevents giant mega-farm monopoly.

A reasonable Solution:

Amend HB4002 to exclude mandatory Ag overtime for farms with less than 100 employees.