

Submitter: Christina Fordyce

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB4002

Many farms in our state are small, family operations under 100 acres that support valuable workers in our communities. These farms not only help provide jobs but also nourish our communities with their fresh quality crops. They also leave an important legacy in our communities by sharing the wisdom and experience that multigenerational operations have to offer. I am blessed to have married into such a family and I see the direct impact our small family farm business has on our community. I speak with our customers and hear about how they and even their parents used to pick berries on our very same farm. This is more than a business - this is an opportunity for intergenerational connection between our family, our employees, and our citizens. Valuable relationships uphold the local economy and continue to support our employees. Our young employees invest in their future, saving for their educations through this seasonal work. Our seasoned employees work right alongside our family to uphold the heart of our passion and provide nourishment to our community. Just last year, my very first time participating in the family's spring strawberry planting, I got to witness the teamwork and companionship that farming can offer. It was a long day for us all - from every hired hand, to the owners, to the kids grabbing water for the crew, down to the baby on my back - we were all a part of the farm together. Those long spring and summer days bring (God willing) a fruitful harvest, food in all our and our customers bellies, and the chance to slow down again when the days turn cold. Sure, there's always work to be done on a farm. Our faithful employees know that even the slower winter days are valuable and necessary. Farming is seasonal - everyone should know this. We all do our part and take care of one another on our farm. The long summer days balance out with the short winter ones. The sweat on our backs is rewarded months later with cool evenings warming up by the fire. Everything hangs in a balance when you live seasonally. Every farmer knows that the crop is just one flood or one drought away from disaster. We must place our trust in Providence in this way of living. We have always been passionate about taking care of our workers and they know they can rely on us to take care of them - they are like family to us. They understand that, like us, that seasonal work means the pay will balance between the seasons. This is the way it works for farmers. I urge our legislators to oppose HB 4002. In a world of unpredictability where we work at the mercy of the elements and rely on hard work and a little bit of luck to get us through each year, I implore you to be one beacon of predictability in our farming season. Do not be the drought that destroys the family farm, taking with it loyal employees who have stayed with us for years whose families we also support. Stand with us and our employees to understand the balance of the seasons and the balance of compensation that goes along with this kind of work. Vote no on HB 4002.