

Submitter: Moira Bowman

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB4002

Each time I buy local Oregon produce and cook a meal I am aware that the workers who have grown and picked this food are not being paid fairly. It is a repeated reminder that systemic racism is alive and well in Oregon's food system. The exclusion of farmworkers from the protections and rights that other workers enjoy is a manifestation of anti-Black histories and nativism. Simply put, Oregon treats our agricultural workforce unfairly because the majority of the workers are immigrants. And the laws we use to justify that unfairness were created to ensure cheap, and mostly Black, labor a century ago. Now is the time - throughout the pandemic, catastrophic fires and hazardous air quality levels, farmworkers continued to work to support Oregon's multibillion dollar agricultural industry and keep our food systems afloat. There could not be a clearer case that agricultural workers are essential. Oregon is behind other states in providing protections and overtime pay to the essential migrant and seasonal workers that our food system depends on. California and Washington have both started to address this equity. Oregon must act now. Pass farmworker overtime.