



To: House Committee on Business and Labor
From: **Isa Peña, Innovation Law Lab**
Re: Support for Farmworker Overtime

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

My name is Isa Peña and I am the Director of Strategy at Innovation Law Lab, an Oregon-based non-profit that leverages advocacy, technology and law for immigrant and refugee justice. I am writing on behalf of our organization in support of HB 4002 Farmworker Overtime. Farmworkers need to receive overtime pay after 40 hours on the job per work week, at one and one-half times the employee's regular rate of pay, as soon as possible.

As an immigrant and refugee justice organization, we believe that all Oregonians—which includes our farmworkers—deserve dignity, respect and labor rights. For too long they have been denied these rights that other workers have been afforded. In 1938, the Fair Labor Standards Act granted most workers protections and overtime pay, none of which were afforded to our farmworkers. It is inhumane and appalling to continue these exclusionary policies while our state experiences a global pandemic, work shortages and extreme working conditions. These policies are unjust, unfair and must be changed.

Farmworkers put their lives on the line every day, especially during this pandemic, and yet they are some of the lowest paid workers in Oregon with a median income of \$28,000 a year. Providing them with fair wages would allow them to provide a better life for themselves and for their families. OHSU's recent report shows that long hours increase the rates of injury and mental health stress and impact the workers' families and quality of life. The least we can do for these essential frontline workers is provide the overtime protections they deserve, and that other states like Washington and California are already providing.

I urge you to pass farmworker overtime in the 2022 Legislative Session to ensure farmworkers in Oregon are paid fairly for their skilled and essential labor.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Isa Peña".

Isa Peña
Director of Strategy
Innovation Law Lab