

Submitter: Alex Duerst

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB4002

I am a third generation farmer in Marion county, raising primarily grass seed. We employ approximately 30 full time employees and hire an additional 10-15 high school and college age kids during harvest. The hours spent working for these kids in the summer time can be 50-60. If ag overtime is passed those kids will be limited to 40 hours. Most kids like that they can work 50-60 hours per week for a short duration of the summer and then have many weeks remaining to do other things. If they were to work at a store or restaurant during the summer they wouldn't get the hours that they can on the farm. 20-30 hours a week at a restaurant vs 50-60 on the farm makes a big difference in a kids summer take home pay. We will be forced to hire more kids but will be keeping hours to 40.

Personally I would be negatively impacted by ag overtime. My extended family owns this farm but I personally do not have any ownership. I am an hourly employee because my job description does not meet the criteria to be a manager. In the busy harvest months I work 80+ hours per week. I also am at a low enough income level where my children are eligible for free health care. In my position there isn't an option to hire more people to do my job during harvest. I would be receiving overtime but it would be increasing my income level to the point where my kids would be ineligible for free health care. With the high cost of health insurance, I would actually be going backwards in regards to earnings since all, and more of my extra overtime pay would be going toward paying for health insurance.

I believe that people can chose what they do for a living. If someone wants to be able to have a job where they can get overtime, then they should seek that out. As grass seed growers we do not have the luxury of setting the price of our seed and passing along any extra costs to the consumer. Overtime, just another expense that we can't pass along, and one that will be detrimental to me and my family personally. Please help to preserve Oregon agriculture and family farms and find a workable solution to HB 4002.