

Submitter: Axcelle Bell

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB4002

Dear Chair Holvey and Members of the House Business and Labor Committee,

I am writing to you today in support of farmworker overtime. Farmworkers should receive overtime pay after 40 hours in a workweek at one and one-half times the employee's regular rate of pay.

We cannot stand by and allow vulnerable folks to bear the burden of our broken food (and economic) system. Establishing farmworker rights to overtime pay will have consequences. We have to set into motion the changes to the food system that are required to make farming a viable profession, an ethical profession, and not one built on, in essence slave labor. Everyone has to eat, and we should all have the resources we need to be able to pay for that ethical, sustainable food. Immigrants should not suffer because we don't have the political courage to do what is common-sense basic ethics.

Farmworkers deserve dignity, respect and labor rights. For too long they have been denied rights other workers have been afforded.

Overtime pay law was created to discourage employers from overworking employees. Before 1938, employers overworked workers even to the point of death. Exclusion from overtime pay requires farmworkers to work many hours without having time to do other things.

It is time for Oregon to join several other states in ending this racist practice of excluding agricultural workers from overtime pay.

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.

Sincerely,
AXCELLE BELL