

Submitter: Anne Krahmer-Steinkamp

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB4002

Dear Chair and other Representative,

I am a 6th generation farmer here in Oregon, farming with my father, brother and my husband. We farm blueberries in Marion, Linn and Columbia county. Our harvest season is about 10-14 weeks. I employ 15 amazing full time employees and 150 to 200 seasonal employees, many of whom come back to my farm year after year. I want to share with you my concerns about the real impacts of HB 4002 on both my farm and my employees.

My full time employees are making \$16 and up. They also get an end of year bonus every year for the appreciation of all their hard work.

My pickers average \$20 per hour picking, my top pickers \$35 to \$40 per hour. The ones at minimum wage are usually first time employees. These are high school and college kids with first time jobs. I will not be able to afford to pay time and half to my pickers, this bill would mean that average pickers would be paid \$30 per hour and the top pickers would be \$52.50 to \$60 per hour. With this added cost it will force us to switch to more machine picked fruit rather than hand picked, resulting in less work for my hand harvest employees, which in turn is less money for them.

As a farmer, I am a price taker, which means that I cannot simply increase the sale price of my berries to account for added labor costs. My fresh prices are estimated the week I take the fruit in but the price doesn't get set until 2 weeks later. This last summer I got the estimated price and then the set price was about \$0.50 less than estimated. I ended up losing money this week and still had already paid my workers, fertilizer/chemicals, packing cost, fuel bill and trucking. That's the economic reality I deal with every day.

The blueberry industry has been in a low price market for about 10 years. I have seen 2 of my neighbors with blueberries close down in the blueberry industry. My last blueberry neighbor is holding on by threads just like me.

My farm works really hard to make a good working place for people. We strive to work with employee schedules, we have clean bathrooms, fair wages, and other things to attract people to come work for us. We understand school schedules, daycare schedules, and short term shut downs in schools and daycares these last 2 years we have dealt with. We don't make our employees work over 40 hours a week, they ask us to work more and they are paid for those extra hours. Just not at the time

and half wage. And if that becomes the new wage I will have to limit hours on them.

I care very much about my employees, I work side by side with them. And this bill is going to hurt them not help them.

I would ask you to ask yourselves “are you ready to kill family farms, and hurt farmworker of Oregon?” That’s the reality of this bill for me! Please don’t follow the same as California and Washington! I oppose this bill!!

Thank you!

Anne Krahmer-Steinkamp