



Testimony in Support of SB 852

Testimony of Danita Harris
Interim Executive Director
Oregon Working Families Party

Chair Holvey, Vice Chair Bonham and Vice Chair Grayber,

My name is Danita Harris, I am the Interim State Director of the Oregon Working Families Party, a minor party here in Oregon that believes in working toward an economy that works for everyone. We are a multiracial, multigenerational home for a populace of working-class Oregonians that stretches across the state. On behalf of the Oregon Working Families Party, I urge you to vote yes on HB 4002 and to pass it out of committee unanimously.

Over the last 2 years, farmworkers have braved a pandemic, wildfires and heatwaves to put food on our tables. They work long hours in grueling conditions, but have been denied one of the most basic workers' rights, overtime pay.

We believe that all workers deserve the same protections and rights. The exclusion of farmworkers from overtime pay was a compromise made to appease Southern landowners to pass the New Deal, at the expense of Black farmworkers. Decades later, this racist exclusion still impacts our most vulnerable workers and disproportionately affects Latinx workers.

Washington and California have already righted this historic wrong. The average Oregonian farmworker made \$20,000 in 2020, and unless Oregon follows suit, workers will head north or south to avoid these poverty wages. Overtime pay for farmworkers is not only an issue of basic economic fairness, but also a means to build our economy.

Without fail Oregon farmworkers brave harsh conditions and ensure that agricultural products are in homes across the county. Without these workers Oregon would suffer immensely. Oregon Working Families Party is in solidarity with farm workers across the state and we urge the committee's support on HB 4002, it is time to overturn this racist policy.