

Co-Chairs Taylor and Holvey, and Members of the Joint Committee on Farm Worker Overtime:

Support for HB 4002A

My name is Claire Berger. I live in Forest Grove, Oregon and am a life-long resident of Oregon. I am a member of the Hillsboro-Forest Grove Branch of the American Association of University Women. This letter is in support of House Bill 4002A which requires that agricultural workers be paid overtime. This is about time we treat farmworker fairly and pay them as the “essential workers” they are rather than second class-class workers. Farm work is a messy, exhausting, and dangerous job and should be compensated fairly.

In the seventies and eighties, I ran day care programs for children of migrant workers in Forest Grove, Oregon and worked as a consultant for the federal government providing support services and technical assistance to Migrant Head Start programs across the US. These programs cared for children aged six weeks through five years and were a critical support to farmers and the parents of the children. I saw how the wages paid for the back-breaking work was minimal and kept the families in poverty. Clearly, overtime pay is overdue. We pay less for fruit and vegetables than most developed countries and it is time to pay farmworkers fairly and make consumers pay their fair share for fresh produce.

Thank you for your consideration!

Claire Berger

Forest Grove, Oregon