

February 23, 2022

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

I am writing to you to voice my support for House Bill 4002A that would require overtime pay for agricultural workers. This legislation is way overdue. When the Fair Labor Standards Act was passed in 1938, farm and domestic workers were exempted from coverage in order to secure the necessary votes for passage. Farm labor is one of the lowest paid jobs in the country hovering around the poverty level. Yet farm workers are considered essential, particularly now in the middle of a pandemic, but they are not fairly compensated.

When I was too young to get a real job, I picked beans to earn a little pocket change. It was hard work and I didn't earn much, but I could buy snacks or pay for a movie which met my needs at that age. I learned first-hand that farm work is hard, physical labor that deserves adequate compensation. Long days of extended hours take a toll that must be addressed with overtime pay.

I strongly believe that it is time that we address the inequity of compensation for agricultural workers and for other low wage jobs as well.

Susan Deeming
Durham, Oregon