

Submitter: Lewis Fitzgerald Holland

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Farm Worker Overtime

Measure: HB4002

Farmworkers, the labor backbone of America that keeps all of us fed and secure, have been historically marginalized from a myriad of labor laws that protect workers in every other sector. Agricultural practices, in tandem with immigration and visa laws, have left these vulnerable workers without the security of citizenship, and the guarantees of health and safety enshrined in other sectors.

The Farm Bureau has tried to peddle a series of lies about the impacts and adjustments that farmworker overtime would impart. Their supposed "study" failed to engage in any sort of sample control, violated the basic tenets of statistical accuracy, and asked farmers who volunteered to respond what their "predicted" outcomes would be. This is not meaningful. Furthermore, their study did not demonstrate the drastic impacts they warn about in California or other states that have implemented farmworker overtime laws.

At their core, statutes that deny farmworkers the overtime pay that other sectors are guaranteed, are rooted in racism and cynical convenience. Every industry that has faced an increase in worker safety protections, or pay raises, or higher standards of any kind, has always peddled out the same lies that the bottom line will diminish and they will be forced out of business. Ultimately, industry always adapts to these changes without the the drama foretold. In Oregon, as our neighbors to the north and south embrace overtime for farmworkers, it is both unconscionable, and against the best interests of farmers struggling to find workers, to maintain the unjust status quo.