

February 24, 2022

To: Joint Committee on Farmworker Overtime

Re: Support for House Bill 4002

My name is Erica Ramos and I am a teacher and resident in Woodburn, OR.

I am submitting testimony today in support of HB 4002, Farmworker Overtime, because farmworkers deserve overtime pay and I believe now is our time to do the right thing.

I am a proud Oregonian, lived here all of my life. I love our community so much that I currently teach at the school I went to. What makes Oregon so special is how we care for our communities and have empathy for others. The Oregon Way is not about numbers for business profit or whether this is good for business or not.. Shouldn't The Oregon Way be caring for and supporting the hands that quite literally feed us? Migrant farmworkers endure freezing temperatures, scorching summers, no benefits, and exposure to chemicals. It's important that we recognize their labor, their contributions and their dignity.

People getting paid hourly to serve coffee get paid overtime and our farmworkers don't. That's not equitable at all. Let's keep in mind that for the introduction of the bill, "overtime" is considered surpassing 55 hours, which is already past the normalized work week. Farmworkers deserve overtime at 40 hours per week.

I teach in a migrant community where I have seen firsthand the repercussions of the treatment of our farmworkers. To highlight the disparities, the students in my class whose parents are farmworkers, are the only ones who don't have access to internet at home. While that may seem superficial, in today's world, where everything requires wifi, those students are placed at a disadvantage because of the limited income of their parents.

The introduction of overtime would supply more food on the dinner table, more than one pair of shoes, a decent winter coat and could allow for more time at home with family. If we don't make conditions better for farmworkers, I am scared for what that will bring to my families. Not making enough in one job will cause families to move even more, disrupting the education of students across the state. Be that change for my students. We need to acknowledge that agriculture work was built on forced labor in this country. It is time for more equitable labor practices in agriculture.

I urge the committee to Vote yes on HB 4002.

Thank you.

Erica Ramos  
Resident of Woodburn