

Submitter: Ben Stickney

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Farm Worker Overtime

Measure: HB4002

Dear representatives,

My name is Ben Stickney. I am a resident of the Kenton neighborhood of Portland.

During this pandemic and the increasingly adverse effects of our changing climate have exposed deep inequalities in wealth, safety protections at work and otherwise, and access to healthcare.

Farmworkers routinely make some of the lowest average wages of any occupation with annual salaries of around \$20,000 according to PCAN, a farmworkers advocacy group. Low wages and benefits have made it nearly impossible for these essential workers to access healthcare and avoid old-age poverty.

The policy being considered in this bill, farmworker overtime, would protect workers from the most predatory and extractive working conditions. The legacy of the racist law to exempt farm workers, a group disproportionately made up of poor immigrants primarily from South America, is that these people are not granted the same structure of compensation and limited working hours enjoyed by workers in all other occupations.

It is the responsibility of the State of Oregon and this legislature to protect the people who are most vulnerable to extreme working conditions and unfair compensation. Please adopt this bill with urgency and work collaboratively with advocacy organizations, farmworkers, and farm businesses to establish a rapid timeline for the adoption of the contents of this bill.

Thank you,

Ben Stickney