



TO: House Committee on Rules  
FR: Ira Cuello-Martinez, PCUN  
RE: Support for HB 2955

April 6, 2023

Chair Fahey, Vice-Chairs Breese Iverson and Kropf, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ira Cuello-Martinez and I am the policy and advocacy director at PCUN, Oregon's Farmworker Union. At PCUN, we work to empower farmworkers and working Latinx families to improve their working conditions through community building, organizing, and policy advocacy.

We strongly support HB 2955 which would designate August 4th as the Bracero Program Day.

Under a wartime agreement between Mexico and the United States, Oregon brought over 15,000 workers from Mexico between 1942 and 1947 using the Mexican Farm Labor Program also known as the Bracero program.<sup>1</sup> These workers were essential in harvesting potatoes, sugar beets, asparagus, onions, cucumbers, and peas, and worked in apple and pear orchards. Despite their massive contribution to our state's agricultural industry, they often experienced discrimination, received substandard wages, and faced poor working and living conditions.

Now, an estimated 86,000 farmworkers contribute to Oregon's multi-billion dollar industry and it is important to honor their essential work. Establishing a state holiday commemorating the Bracero program acknowledges their contributions to our state, recognizes this important part of our state's history that is often forgotten, and honors the farmworkers during the 1940s and those who continue that legacy today.

I urge the committee to honor the Braceros and their contributions to Oregon by voting yes on HB 2955.

Ira Cuello-Martinez  
Policy and Advocacy Director  
PCUN

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<sup>1</sup> Mexican Laborers Pick Potatoes, 1943 - Oregon History Project A project of the Oregon Historical Society  
<https://www.oregonhistoryproject.org/articles/historical-records/mexican-laborers-pick-potatoes-1943/#.ZC79OXaZO3A>