

Submitter: Amanda Stevens
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2548

My name is Amanda Stevens and I along with my husband own Nottinghamshire Farms in St.Paul OR. We grow certified organic fruit and vegetables on 80 acres that we lease.

HB2548 is a bill that will negatively affect farms all across Oregon and potentially the US. As it is having a small business let alone a farm in Oregon is extremely difficult. I believe having locally produced vegetables is essential for a stable society and economy and bills like this would jeopardize this by adding to the very high labor cost we already have.

As a fresh market farmer, I do not have crop insurance or get to set my prices with my wholesale customers. This bill would allow unelected bureaucrats the power to set wages and safety rules that go far beyond current protections, adding more regulatory and cost burden to farms. There would be no accountability for the decisions they make, even if their decisions hurt the workers and the business. For if the farms close the jobs go away.

This bill HB 2548 eliminates at-will employment for farms and ranches. It targets farms and puts us at risk for expensive claims making necessary staffing decisions. All other private sectors in Oregon will still have the at-will status, but farms are being targeted by the government. This is unfair and seems to undermine the stability of our society, as we should be supporting our citizens to be self-sufficient and contributing members of society. Farms help in this by offering jobs, food and care takers for our land and environment.

On our farm we have had to adjust our business drastically over the last few years to help control labor cost. This includes cutting crops and limiting hours of our workers. This is all so we can continue to farm and offer some level of employment. Our workers are not happy with the decrease in hours which equals a decrease in take home pay. What that said HB 2548 has the very real potential of being the end our family farm.

I urge you to think about what kind of produce you want to eat and where you want it to come from before you vote on HB 2548 and please vote no.

Kind regards,

Amanda Stevens
Nottinghamshire Farms