

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

My name is Kaitlyn Choate, and my family and I strongly OPPOSE this bill. I grew up on my family's farm, A&R Farms, in Scio. I attended and graduated from Oregon State University in the spring of 2024 with a degree in family business and finance. I have returned full-time to the farm in a truly unprecedented time for agriculture. It seems that every time I turn around, the government is making it harder for us rural farmers, who are just trying to feed America. I have always dreamed of carrying on the farm my father started, but more and more every day, it feels like our farm—and others like it—are running near in the red and constantly threatened by plummeting commodity markets and government policies. When will you allow us to simply farm, and when will you begin supporting our crops instead of turning to Mexico or Ecuador, who don't face the same burdensome regulations?

Enough is enough!

My family farm, along with neighboring farms, is already struggling to cope with the agricultural overtime laws. This year will be a big test, as the maximum hours have been reduced to just 48. The legislators who put these regulations in place have no understanding of what it's like to farm or work in the agricultural industry. Our seasons and workloads vary dramatically, and the government seems to believe that we don't care about our employees, which couldn't be further from the truth.

The Farm Workforce Standards Board, if implemented, could be the death of countless family farms and ranches, including my own. We cannot afford the legal costs this bill would expose us to, and we're already unable to sell our crops at a profitable margin. The government expects us to operate like a large corporation, but we are small, family-owned businesses with limited resources.

This has to stop. Why are small, rural family farms always the target of these intense and impractical regulations? We are already struggling to survive, and this bill could push us over the edge.

I urge you to not push this bill through. Please take some time to carefully consider how devastating this would be for family farms and ranches. It is not like our industry is not already regulated and that there aren't any worker protections in place.

Thank you for your time and attention.