

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

I strongly OPPOSE HB 2548 that relates to labor standards for agricultural workers. Oregon farmers provide nutritious and affordable food and fiber to Oregonians and the world. However, Oregon is losing alarming acres of farmland and farmers each year due to Oregon's progressive laws and over-taxation. HB 2548 puts Oregon's farm and ranch families in an untenable position.

- **Economic Hardships:** First and foremost, many Oregon farms are already struggling with poor yields and low commodity prices. Most will spend the next several years recovering from cash losses incurred in 2023 and 2024. HB 2548 adds another layer of uncertainty that could force family farms into financial ruin.
- **Shift in Burden of Proof:** HB 2548 would require employers to prove the reasonableness of a termination, shifting the burden to them. Family farms and ranches would be vulnerable to costly litigation, as they would need to defend against employment claims, even in situations involving market conditions, poor yields, or weather events.
- **Increased Litigation Costs:** Family farms already face enormous financial strain. It costs around \$75,000 just to settle a claim before it reaches court. Adding legal risks will only increase financial pressure, especially for small, family-run operations.
- **Impediments to Staffing Flexibility:** HB 2548 limits necessary flexibility for staffing and termination decisions, making it harder for employers to navigate the unpredictability of farming. These restrictions could lead to difficulty in hiring and maintaining a workforce.

HB 2548 threatens the livelihood of family farms and ranches by imposing unnecessary legal burdens. It increases costs and limits the flexibility needed to manage agricultural businesses. At a time when family farms are struggling to stay afloat, the legislature should reject this punitive concept.

Please vote NO on HB 2548.

In closing, thank you for protecting our farmland and supporting farmers with a NO vote that will allow agribusiness to continue producing critical fresh and affordable food for Oregonians.