

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

TO: House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards

FROM: Lindsey Trempler

SUBJECT: Yes on HB 2548

Dear Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Elmer and Muñoz, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lindsey, I live in Corvallis, Oregon and I am writing in strong support of HB 2548 to create a Farmworker Standards Board in Oregon.

There are over 72,000 Oregon farmworkers, who put food on our tables and contribute over \$6.4B to our state's economy, yet they experience poor working conditions and earn an average of just \$34,500 annually. Most farmworkers are immigrants from Mexico, Guatemala, and Central America, many of whom speak an Indigenous language.

HB 2548 will give historically excluded workers their first voice in setting industry standards with real enforcement power and accountability. The board will ensure access to fair wages, safe conditions, and protection from retaliation. This board will also create a space where consistent conversations with equal representation from workers and employers can set policy for the agricultural industry, outside of the rushed timelines and political pressures of a legislative session.

Cities and states across the country have proven that workforce standards boards work. These boards bring workers together with industry and public representatives to set meaningful standards, with real enforcement power to ensure accountability. From New York's farm laborers to Minnesota's nursing home staff to Seattle's domestic workers, these boards give workers the voice and protections they deserve and give our communities the essential food we need.

I was 14 when I started working on a farm for the first time. I have worked ESL programs at farms after farm workers are done working for the day. These people need their voices heard. They are a critical part of the food system and deserve to be heard. They know how the systems on their farms work the best and how to create a better and more productive work environment. They have the experience.

Higher standards for farm workers will make Oregon more attractive to domestic farm workers than neighboring states, helping to alleviate worker shortages. Coming to the table with workers and employers will help design employee guidelines and provide industry vetted resource requests to the legislature for funding to implement new policies. Agricultural workers and employers know our industry best and should be empowered to make decisions about it in a balanced, facilitated space like the board, not leaving these important decisions to legislators without experience in agriculture. It is our responsibility in the ag industry to work together to make sure our industry is treating people with dignity, care and respect.

I urge you to vote YES on HB 2548 to create a Farmworker Standards Board and give farmworkers the ability to set standards for the industry.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Trempler