



March 12, 2025

To: House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards

From: Peter Hainley, CASA of Oregon

Re: Support for HB 2548

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

My name is Peter Hainley. I am the executive director of CASA of Oregon. CASA has been working with local communities to create housing, facilities and asset building opportunities for 37 years. We were originally founded to address the lack of housing for farmworkers and that work is still a foundation of our current mission

The state of Oregon has long-held the importance of farmworkers to our state's agriculture industry. It is the reason that we have passed laws to protect them, compensate them and house them. These laws have been passed because farmworkers lack many of the basic protections available to most other workers (ie access to protections under the National Labor Relations Act, lack of documentation means lack of access to federal programs as well as the lack of protections afforded under several federal programs). And we know that in certain industries, particularly hemp and marijuana, workers have been subjected to abuse.

The establishment of workforce boards is an elegant solution to better the working conditions for farmworkers. Having a table for employers and workers to sit at is crucial in balancing the power differential between those who are often taken advantage of due to language and cultural barriers. The Workforce Standards Boards will even the playing field and provide space for constructive dialogue.

Farmworkers are the background of our \$6.4 billion agricultural industry. HB 2548 will give historically-excluded workers a voice in setting industry standards. The board will ensure access to fair wages, safe working conditions, and protection from retaliation. By allowing farmworkers to set standards for their industry, HB 2548 not only helps keep farmworkers safe, but also improves the likelihood that agricultural labor, an essential and critical industry in Oregon, can provide stable employment— a critical factor in reducing rates of poverty and food insecurity.

I urge you to vote YES on HB 2548 to create a Farmworker Standards Board and allow farmworkers to set standards for their industry. Thank you for your attention to this important matter and thank you for your service to the people of Oregon.

Sincerely,

Peter Hainley
Executive Director