



House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards

March 12, 2025

Testimony in Support of HB 2548

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

My name is Kathy Lara, Policy Analyst for the Oregon Center for Public Policy, and I respectfully submit this testimony in support of House Bill 2548 on behalf of the Center. The Oregon Center for Public Policy is a nonpartisan think tank that uses research and analysis to improve the economic outcomes for all Oregonians, especially for those struggling to make ends meet.

Oregon relies on the essential work of farmworkers. The state has approximately [72,000](#) farmworkers in Oregon, who contribute billions to our economy. Yet farmworkers are one of the [lowest earners](#) compared to other occupations. And at the same time, they face challenging working conditions and have [fewer rights to improve workplace conditions](#).

HB 2548 would establish a Farmworker Standards Board to set fair wages, improve working conditions, and ensure that farmworkers have a voice in shaping industry standards. By bringing together workers, employers, and public representatives, the board would create industry-wide protections that address issues like pay, health and safety, and workforce sustainability.

HB 2548 brings farmworkers and industry together. The bill creates a board that brings workers, employers, and the public together to collaborate and develop solutions. The board would set industry-specific standards by studying the sector's unique challenges and developing reasonable standards on such things as wages, health and safety, and other workplace conditions. With multiple stakeholders at the table, the board can produce decisions that take into account multiple perspectives and create practical, sustainable solutions for the industry.

HB 2548 stands on proven models that address industry challenges. Workforce standards boards are not a new concept. They've been successfully implemented

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across the country over the last several years. States like California, New York, and Minnesota have used this model to set wages, improve job quality, and reduce turnover.

- [California Fast Food Council](#): Established in 2023, the California Fast Food Council sets minimum standards relating to hours, wages, health and safety and other working conditions for the fast food industry.
- [Minnesota Nursing Home Workforce Standards Board](#): Created in 2023, the Minnesota Nursing Home Workforce Standards Board sets rules regarding wages, training, and other working conditions. It [established rules for wages, holiday pay](#) and worker training in 2024.
- [New York Farm Laborers Wage Board](#): Formed in 2020, the New York Farm Laborers Wage Board was responsible for recommending lowering the overtime threshold from 60 to 40 hours for farmworkers.

HB 2548 levels the playing field for business. HB 2548 allows for the board's recommendations to apply to the entire agricultural sector. This type of standard [setting helps high-road businesses](#), as they are no longer at a disadvantage when they invest in their workers or simply abide by existing employment law. Additionally, standards apply to all workers in the sector – regardless if they are direct employees or subcontracted workers. HB 2548 ensures that employers compete on a fair playing field by operating under similar labor standards and costs, rather than [undercutting wages and benefits](#) to gain an advantage

HB 2548 can improve conditions for tens of thousands of Oregon workers and their families by establishing a farmworkers workforce standards board to set industry-wide standards and protections. These boards would create fairer wages and better working conditions, while giving a voice to farmworkers. By ensuring industry-wide improvements, HB 2548 would contribute to a more equitable and fair economy for Oregon as a whole.

We urge you to support HB 2548.

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