

House Committee on Labor & Workforce Standards

Testimony regarding House Bill 2548 Recommendation: OPPOSE

HB 2548 creates an insurmountable obstacle to private enterprise in Oregon. I am sure the committee will hear much valid testimony about negative *economic* impacts foreseen as a consequence of creating such excessive government oversight of agricultural producers.

I wish to address the issue from a different perspective: the *human dignity* of both employees and employers, the vigorous contributions of *individual ingenuity* involved in producing amazing agricultural products, and the *detrimental personal impacts* I believe will result from the proposed legislation.

Imagine you are a farmworker who enjoys your work and the working relationship with your employer, or an employer who appreciates your staff. Your mutually beneficial relationship has already been compromised by Paid Leave Oregon which inserts itself between employer and employee in matters of managing schedules and time off. Now, under the proposed legislation, the employee's ability to negotiate other terms of employment together with the employer's ability to establish what needs to be done on the farm, ranch, dairy, orchard, ( or other agricultural enterprise) will be eliminated. Neither will have the authority to develop and manage what was formerly a mutually beneficial work arrangement. Prior to HB 2548, you might have agreed to work longer hours during harvest for more time off at less pressing times of the year; you might have made arrangements to pursue personal interests (attend a wedding or provide support for your kids (academic, artistic or athletic, etc.). In exchange, you might have *designed a creative solution to fit your unique situation*. Where previously you and your employer could work out the details to your mutual satisfaction, now government intrusion into your working relationship through HB 2548, among other policies and rules, restricts your ability to manage your priorities, think for yourself, or voice your own opinion to the point that you have little say in your own affairs.

I abhor the proposed legislation on the grounds that it substitutes unnecessary external regulatory authority for individual agency. It reduces the self-employed, and those they employ, to serfs. It ignores the creative and productive capacities of individuals, the synergy of combined efforts to manage farms and other agricultural endeavors. It substitutes third party priorities for the valuable ideas and strategies agricultural producers contribute to their operations, and to Oregon. It eliminates vitality and creates conflict. In all ways, it is a bad idea.

I urge the committee to shred the proposed House Bill 2548 and instead figure out ways to contribute to a thriving private sector which honors and celebrates individual dignity, creativity, and cooperation by leaving the decision making to those employees and employers directly involved in the working relationships.