

Chair Grayber and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your time today.

I oppose HB2548 and I ask that you do so as well.

My husband and I grow specialty seeds along with mushrooms. We are a small farm with both myself and my husband working full time, one part time employee on our mushroom farm and a full to part time employee on our grass seed farm. During harvest we will add another part time employee to drive equipment.

Oregon already has many different protections in place for employees. There's BOLI protecting employee rights, OSHA that ensures workplace safety, we have a minimum wage system that is double the national minimum wage, we have the same rest break schedule as every other industry, along with many other health and safety requirements. With all these protections I'm wondering why a bill like this is being pushed through? Are you saying these agencies, laws and regulations aren't enough? If they are failing then maybe before passing something like this you should focus on holding the agencies accountable that oversee these protections.

Of course there are parts to this bill that are good and they are things we all want. But they are already covered under all the protections already in place. We don't need another bill to double up on it. And to any of the bad actors out there, the farms that don't treat their employees well, they need to be held accountable by the agencies already in place..

The audacity that a handful of people think that it's appropriate to step in and legislate unionizing an entire industry is mind boggling. And I say unionizing because that's what this bill is. This is coercion. You are ripping away the freedom of the individual with a bill like this.

There is nothing stopping a group of farm workers from forming their own union. The fact that they haven't or can't tells me there isn't enough interest. Please stop forcing people to do things they don't want.

I'm assuming most of you know that we have over 250 different agriculture products produced in Oregon. With this comes so many different situations, variables, needs, seasons, harvests, hours, tools, skill level, etc. How do you create a one size fits all for something like this? Have any of you spent the time and talked to farmers in all these different industries? Half of them? A quarter of them? I know you won't be the ones figuring out how this is all implemented but don't you think you should at least have a basic understanding of how a bill like this will affect farms?

And to everyone who isn't directly connected to agriculture, don't think a bill like this will stop at us. They will be coming for every other industry until no one has any freedom whatsoever.

We care about our farm workers. We go to their weddings, baby showers, kids graduation celebrations, we become friends, we know their partners and their kids. We care about our farm workers.

Our farm workers work for us because they like the type of work we have to offer. They like the flexibility and freedoms working on a farm allows. They know it's hard work but it's good work. I know many people that choose to work on a farm even though they could get a better paying job elsewhere. They choose working on a farm because of so many different positive reasons. A bill like this will take away all the flexibility we always offer.

We, farmers/employers, struggle with all the same things many of the farm workers shared. Many of us don't have health insurance and we don't get paid what we're worth. We worry about not having a job, as in going out of business. Farming has become more and more difficult and we are losing family farms of all sizes every year. This takes a toll on us physically, mentally and emotionally. The responsibility we carry to provide not only for ourselves but those who work for us is tremendous.

This last year there was a new regulation in Linn County voted on that affected a specific farm. The wife of that farm ended up taking her own life because she couldn't take it anymore. The never ending laws, rules and regulations becomes overwhelming. All this on top of the weather and markets we can't control. We are real and normal people too.

Please vote no on this ridiculous bill.

Thanks for your time.

Katie Boshart Glaser

A couple things I heard said during testimony yesterday....

- Agencies like OSHA and BOLI aren't fully funded. I didn't look this up, I'm going with what was said. If this is the case then how about we fully fund them so they can be effective instead of passing this bill which will create more of a tax burden.

- There is a HUGE difference between farm workers working on a farm directly for a farmer vs employment agencies. Before you legislate unionizing an entire industry, look to see where the majority of the problems are between these two groups.

- There are farms that hire undocumented immigrants which allows them to be mistreated. If this is the case then these farms need to be held accountable as both parties are breaking the law.

- Some of the panel members that are advocating for this bill said it's overwhelming how many farm workers are in support of this bill. One of the Committee Members asked what areas or farms they are talking to farm workers. The response was, they've primarily asked farm workers in the Woodburn, Marion County, and Polk County. How can you get a real understanding of what people want when you're focused on such a small area of the state. They admitted they've put forth no effort to talk to farm workers on the eastern side of the state.

None of my employees want this. I don't know of a single farm worker in my area that wants this bill to pass. They know as much as I do that this will take away their freedom and flexibility.