



March 12, 2025

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

My name is Odalis Aguilar and I am writing on behalf of Oregon AFSCME in strong support of HB 2548 with the proposed -2 amendment. Our union represents over 39,000 workers across the state in both public and private sectors and we believe in economic and social justice for all Oregon workers and their families.

For generations, farmworkers have been excluded from basic labor protections that others have through the National Labor Relations Act. Despite doing some of the most important work in our state, they have no formal way to improve their working conditions or ensure their voices are heard. 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.

As someone who grew up working in the fields alongside both my immediate and extended family, the conditions and dangers of working in the fields were at times unbearable. Whether it's rain or shine, farmworkers put their lives at risk because they cannot afford to miss a single day of work. When workers feel heard, workplace conditions improve and so do the lives of workers and their families. Oftentimes, farmworkers fear reaching out for help because of retaliation that could lead to job termination or other consequences. Establishing a board where farmworkers can access a fair process to address fair wages, safe conditions, and protection from retaliation is highly needed as the industry continues to grow.

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. We 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.

In solidarity,
Odalis Aguilar
Oregon AFSCME