



OREGON LEGISLATIVE BIPOC CAUCUS

March 14, 2025

Chair Grayber, Vice-Chair Elmer, Vice-Chair Muñoz, and Members of the House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards,

My name is Ricki Ruiz, and I have the honor of representing House District 50, which includes the vibrant communities of Gresham and parts of Outer East Portland. I come before you not only as a state legislator, but as the co-chair of the BIPOC Caucus.

Last month, the BIPOC Caucus released our [Stronger Together: 2025 Policy Agenda](#)—a collective vision rooted in the belief that every Oregonian, no matter their background or where they come from, deserves dignity and respect. Today, I am writing to express the Caucus' support for HB 2548 -2: the Agricultural Workplace Standards Board.

Please note the BIPOC Caucus has grown significantly in the array of voices, ideas, and lived experiences within the caucus. As such, the policy agenda does not necessarily reflect the views or positions of any individual member, nor does it obligate individual members to support particular bills.

When federal labor protections were written in the 1930s, farmworkers—largely people of color—were deliberately left out. This legacy is evident in persistent wage disparities, extreme weather working conditions, and fear of retaliation. Farm work remains one of the most dangerous occupations in the U.S., with fatality rates over 5 times higher than the average job.¹ Yet, because of unequal labor policies of the past, farmworkers have had little power to demand safer conditions. This history is why bills like HB 2548 -2—which aim to extend labor standards and protections to farmworkers—are fundamentally about correcting long-standing injustices.

The BIPOC Caucus stands in support of HB 2548 -2 because it aligns with our commitment to advancing racial and economic justice for communities of color across the state. Farmworkers—who are overwhelmingly Latino/a, Indigenous, and immigrant here in Oregon—have been systematically excluded from fundamental labor protections for generations, a direct result of policies rooted in racial discrimination.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ricki Ruiz
Co-Chair, Oregon Legislative BIPOC Caucus

¹ From *National Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries in 2023*. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2024). *Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries*.