

**WILLY CHOTZEN**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
DISTRICT 46



## **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Dear Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Elmer & Muñoz, and members of the committee,

My name is Willy Chotzen, and I am the State Representative for House District 46, encompassing much of Southeast Portland. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 2548 -2.

In Oregon, there are more than 72,000 farmworkers working in over 35,000 farms across the state. Right now, none of those individuals are represented by a labor group or board that would protect their rights or working conditions. The National Labor Relations Act – which grants workers the right to unionize, engage in collective bargaining and promote fair labor practices – currently excludes farmworkers.

This exclusion, rooted in racism, dates back to the 1930's and disproportionately affects Latino and immigrant farmworkers, who make up a significant portion of the agricultural workforce in Oregon. According to USDA census data, the total market value of agricultural products sold in Oregon rose from \$5 billion in 2017 to nearly \$6.8 billion in 2022—a 36% increase.

Farmworkers have also seen an increase in farm consolidation, a long-term trend of decreasing the number of farms with an increase in farm size and production. These factors make this an essential moment to establish a workplace standards board for farmworkers in Oregon. The board would have the authority to establish standards related to wages, health and safety, and training above the national standards that OSHA and BOLI currently have in place.

While the right to organize exists in Oregon, there is no board for agricultural workers to negotiate the terms of employment, wages, hours, leave, or other benefits affecting these workers. HB 2548 -2 offers a solution that ensures the safety and sustainability of both the farms and the labor force that supports them.

For these reasons, I urge your support on HB 2548 -2.

Thank you,  
Willy Chotzen

*Willy Chotzen*