

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 2358. This bill will have a negative impact on my family cattle ranching business. Our family ranch employs three full time people all year and hires other help for seasonal use. Our profit margins are very thin, with labor being are largest budget item. Requiring time and a half pay for hours in excess of 40 each week would be detrimental and unaffordable. Raising cattle and hay is not a 40 hour a week occupation and those that live and work in it understand this. There are times of the year (calving, haying and gathering) when 40 hours just simply is not enough. Before my husband and I could afford to ranch on our own, he worked on several different ranches. Never had he expected to be paid time and a half, as long hours are just part of what he signed up to do when taking the job.

Ranch positions sometimes provide a different set of benefits for employees. Employees typically are supplied with a house, paid utilities, fresh beef and do not have their pay decreased when they take some time off. Flexibility and fewer hours worked during less busy times are important to retain help. Some larger ranches are able to provide group health plans for their employees, as well. Each ranch is different in their benefits, but these are incentives for their employees to continue working for them. All of these benefits are at a cost to the employer, so what would they have to take away from their employee to be able to afford time and a half?

Ranchers are price takers. We do not get to set the price we receive for our calves or cull cattle. Our price is dependent on the current market, which is dependent on supply & demand, as well as other variables. We also have been faced with several droughts in the last 10 years, which means we may have to purchase hay instead of raising it or sell cattle due to no grass for pasture. Agriculture is an important economic business to our state, yet many producers have gone out of business in recent years.

In closing, we simply cannot afford HB 2358. Please help our agricultural industry by opposing this bill!

Thank you for your time,

Katie Baltzor

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