



March 8, 2021

Chair Holvey, Vice-Chairs Bonham, and Grayber, and Members of the House Business and Labor Committee,

My name is Danita Harris, and I am with the Oregon Working Families Party. Founded in 2006, the Oregon Working Families Party fights for an economy that works for all of us. I am writing you today in support of HB 2358, farmworker overtime.

HB 2358 guarantees overtime pay to agricultural workers after 40 hours in a workweek at one and one-half times the employee's regular rate of pay. This includes farmworkers who are paid by piece-rate, or hourly. Oregon would join five other states (California, Washington, New York, Minnesota, Hawaii) with some sort of overtime pay for agricultural workers. HB 2358 extends overtime benefits to farmworkers which have been available to the majority of other workers since the Federal Labor Standards Act of 1938.

During the wildfires we experienced less than a year ago, we hailed our agricultural workers as heroes for facing harrowing conditions to ensure that food flows would suffer the least amount of interruption possible. Last year was not the first time agricultural workers faced these conditions. The reality is their work is place-based and time-bound putting these workers at extreme risk of health effects related to exposure and heat. These *frontline workers* continue to show up despite facing a respiratory pandemic, wildfires, and more recently, a winter storm. Agricultural workers deserve to be paid fairly for their labor.

Oregon greatly benefits from agricultural work, in fact, numbers from OHA reflect an estimated 174,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers contributing to Oregon's multi-billion dollar agricultural industry. With better wages, these workers will increase consumer spending, especially within local businesses and rural communities. Communities economically hit hard due to COVID-19.

HB 2358 will create economic stability for a class of workers who have been excluded from basic labor standards such as minimum wage, collective bargaining rights, and overtime pay.

I urge you to vote yes on HB 2358 to ensure farmworkers in Oregon are adequately paid for their labor.

Sincerely,

*Danita Harris*  
*Executive Director*  
*Oregon Working Families Party*