



Virginia Garcia Memorial
HEALTH CENTER

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

FR: Gil Muñoz, CEO, Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center

RE: **Support for HB 2358**

We write to voice our strong support of House Bill 2358 increasing the economic security for Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFWs) by extending overtime pay for every hour worked over 40 hours per week.

Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center provides high quality, culturally appropriate health care to more than 52,000 patients every year that live and work in Washington and Yamhill counties. For more than 45 years, we have offered primary, dental, and behavioral and mental health services. We work every day to address and remove the barriers that prevent our patients from receiving the care they need, especially the financial barriers our agricultural worker patients experience. Agricultural workers make up about 15% of the patients we serve.

Since the start of the pandemic, the COVID-19 positivity rate in our patient population has consistently been at least 3 times higher than the Oregon average. These disproportionate infection rates are partly because our patients need to work to keep their families housed and to keep food on the table. We know that contracting COVID-19 exacerbates inequities in income, housing, and access to health care that farm workers already face. The need to quarantine and miss work, without the necessary financial resources, such as paid sick leave, complicates their lives even further.

Today, in addition to providing high quality, culturally appropriate health care, we are also participating as one of the Oregon Worker Relief Fund navigating organizations. This fund provides temporary financial relief to thousands of immigrant workers who contribute to the collective prosperity of Oregon, despite experiencing disproportionate harm, hunger, homelessness due to wage loss caused by COVID-19. Our experience as navigators convinces us that the need far exceeds the available funds as demonstrated by the exhaustion of available support in less than 3 weeks since the most recent extension of the fund.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 2358. In light of the economic challenges faced by agricultural workers that affect their health, we respectfully urge you to extend overtime pay to them.