

My name is Chanel Ison and I am testifying 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. Farmworkers are underpaid and exploited for their cheap labor. According to the National Agricultural Workers Survey, individual farm workers earn \$15,000 to \$17,499 a year and families are estimated to make between \$20,000 and \$25,000 a year. It is completely ridiculous and absolutely disgusting that the people that make up the backbone of our food systems are treated and paid so very little for their labor--- on top of the fact that they are not given overtime pay. Farm workers are essential workers who continue to show up and feed our communities despite facing a respiratory pandemic, wildfires, and more recently, a winter storm. Agricultural workers deserve to be paid fairly for their labor.

I am a Filipino-American whose ancestors came to the US as farmworkers due to displacement in our own country caused by US-backed violence and exploitation of our land and people. The US government not only continues to uphold exploitation and violence towards Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and lands abroad but also continues to exploit its own BIPOC communities and local natural resources. It is absolutely insidious that we exist in a society that supposedly values hardwork as a means to success but completely ignores the fact that from rise to dusk, farmers, who of which are majority BIPOC, are not compensated a livable wage for doing the hardest, most labor intensive work that exists. This exploitation must come to an end.

In the spirit of International Women's Day, which is today, I urge you to stand with farmers-- especially working women and mothers of color-- who continue to build movements and sacrifice in order to feed our communities at the expense of their own lives and wellness. I urge you to support HB 2358 to create economic stability to a class of workers who have been excluded from basic labor standards such as minimum wage, collective bargaining rights, and overtime pay. Supporting HB 2358 is the bare minimum that we can do to support efforts towards true justice and accountability, progressive systems change, and anti-racist work.

Sincerely,
Chanel Ison