



LatinoNetwork

**Testimony of Anthony Castaneda, Policy Manager
Regarding HB 2358 Farmworker Overtime
House Committee on Business and Labor
February 23th, 2021**

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

Latino Network proudly and loudly joins the farmworkers of Oregon in support of HB 2358 to guarantee that agricultural workers are fairly compensated for their hard and honest work.

For more than three quarters of a century, the Federal Labor Standards Act of 1938 excluded our farmworkers from receiving overtime pay and benefits. The time is long overdue for this policy change.

Latino Network is a culturally specific nonprofit serving children, youth, and families in Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties. Every year our organization provides transformative services to thousands of families in the areas of education and mentorship, leadership development, and family stability.

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. The bill also includes farmworkers who are paid by "the crate" or hourly.

We know that agricultural workers are proud of their work. They are proud to steward and care for our fields and crops that feed and nourish Oregon and the world. Even in the harshest conditions, farmworkers show up on time and stay until the job is done. They are frontline workers who 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.

Farmworkers are underpaid for their 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.¹ Most of these workers and their families do not have healthcare coverage through their employer. As a result, migrant and seasonal

¹ National Farm Worker Ministry: Low Wages <http://nfwm.org/farm-workers/farm-worker-issues/low-wages/>



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farmworkers experience higher rates of specific health problems such as diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease and cancer than most other Oregonians.

Oregon and the agricultural industry benefit from farmworkers, and their labor is instrumental to the growth of the industry and related industries, such as the agritourism industry. According to OHA, there are roughly 174,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers, and related family members, that contribute to Oregon's multi-billion dollar agricultural industry.² With better wages, there will be an increase in consumer spending, especially in local businesses and rural communities.

Latino Network urges you to vote YES on HB 2358 to ensure farmworkers in Oregon are fairly paid for their labor that continues to sustain and grow our beautiful state's agricultural industry.

Sincerely,

Anthony Castaneda
Policy Manager
Latino Network

² OHA, Vital Role of Migrants in the State Economy.
<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/HPA/HP-PCO/Pages/Migrant-Health.aspx#:~:text=An%20estimated%20174%2C000%20migrant%20and,multi%2Dbillion%20dollar%20agricultural%20industry>.