

Hi my name is Dagoberto Morales and I'm the director of Unete and I'm here to support proposal HB 2358. This bill recognizes the farm workers and their contributions to the economy and their important role in helping the community during the COVID crisis. This bill will compensate the long hours they work, often over 8 hours a day or more than 40 hours a week. The bill would allow them to earn extra money to help them subsist throughout the winter. Due to the seasonal nature of agricultural work in Oregon a high percentage of agribusiness ceases production during the winter.

As you are aware last summer in southern Oregon we had the Almeda Fire which destroyed over 2600 homes and left many people without housing. Not only did they lose their homes but they also lost all of their belongings including money they had stashed away at home. Due to the age of their trailers they were uninsurable. A large percentage of these homes were owned by farmworkers. Currently there is a 0% vacancy rate in Jackson county and this lack of housing incentivized the housing market to raise the price of rental homes to an extremely high level, around \$1500 for a two bedroom apartment. These rental costs are unaffordable for the income levels of the farmworkers. Many still earn minimum wage even after working for a company for 20 years. This bill would allow them to earn additional income. and be rightly compensated just like all other workers in Oregon for the extra hours.

At Unete we have spoken with many farmworkers who have said "thank you" for this bill. It has given them some hope. Raising a family on minimum wage is impossible in our current housing situation. Farm workers are not second class citizens and should be afforded the same rights as any other workers. This level of discrimination in labor is not acceptable. The workers consider this bill as a way for them to be treated fairly and recognized for their contributions to our economy and society. Thank you very much and a big thank you from the farmworkers of southern Oregon. We urge you to please support the passage of HB 2385.