

My name is Wendy Coates and I farm with my family in Marion County. After listening to testimony about HB2358, I felt I needed to address this bill again. It is not a racial inequity issue, this is an economic issue. People have a choice of where they work. They are not forced to work in the agriculture industry. Agriculture is not a Monday through Friday 8am to 5pm job. We have to work with Mother Nature and she is not always cooperative. We have to work when the crops are ready or we lose them in the fields.

As a farmer, I am a price taker, which means that I cannot simply increase the sale price of my crops to account for added labor costs. Consumers set our prices and will buy from other states or countries that sell at a cheaper price. I will have to absorb any added overhead. That's the economic reality I deal with every day.

HB 2358 would require every farm and ranch in Oregon to pay overtime to employees after 40 hours of work. Currently, agriculture is exempt from overtime pay under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act and in most other states because of the unique seasonal nature of agricultural production, affecting both the total period when agricultural activities can be pursued and the days within the "season" when work can be performed. If workers work 52 weeks, 40 hours per week at \$12.50 per hour, they make \$26,000 per year. Most do not work all 52 weeks per year, but they do work lots of hours during harvest, so they have flexibility the remainder of the year. Adding overtime requirements would not be good for agriculture right now. With all the new rules and regulation we have to follow, it is difficult to survive in this industry. I have always known I wanted to farm, but in today's world it is getting harder and harder.

Please oppose HB 2358 this session. This bill would negatively impact not only family farmers and ranchers in Oregon, but also agricultural workers!