

Submitter: Ben Stickney

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB4002

Oregon's farmworkers are on the front lines of the climate crisis, but their arduous and increasingly dangerous work has long been excluded from overtime pay. This intentional exclusion is the legacy of racist policymaking in the 1938 Federal Labor Standards Act. Our farmworker community faces the direct impacts of climate change daily working through catastrophic fires, hazardous air quality levels, and dangerous heat waves. This bill works to ensure farm workers receive overtime wages after working 40 hours a week, and that their lives are valued by extending overtime guarantees for their labor.

The pandemic has exacerbated economic and health disparities across the state, and farm workers have been one of the greatest impacted communities - suffering under a system that severely undervalues their humanity and labor. By being excluded from overtime, farm workers not only miss out on wages, but the opportunity to meet basic needs. Long, unpaid hours and already low wages averaging \$17,500-19,000 per year according to PCUN Oregon, a farm workers advocacy group, create significant barriers to seeking health services and medication and avoiding poverty in old age.

I urge you to pass this bill to ensure that every Oregonian is given equal opportunity to earn overtime pay, addressing the long history of this racist policy.