

Feb. 7, 2022

To: House Committee on Business and Labor
From: Catalina de Onís, PhD
Re: Support for Farmworker Overtime

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

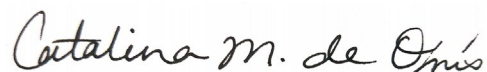
My name is Catalina de Onís, and I live in Salem, Oregon.

I am writing the House Committee on Business and Labor today in support of farmworker overtime. Farmworkers should receive overtime pay after 40 hours in a work week at one and one-half times the employee's regular rate of pay. I'd like to emphasize the importance of expediting the implementation timeline for farmworker overtime, should House Bill 4002 be approved, as five years is far too long for farmworkers and their families and communities to wait!

As a professor who teaches about and researches topics related to farmworkers in the Willamette Valley and the Pacific Northwest more broadly, this issue is of great importance to me. I have had the honor of teaching students who have labored in the fields and whose parents have done and continue to do this work. Their stories of injustice, struggle, and perseverance point to the urgent need to ensure that farmworkers are compensated fairly for their time and labor. Overtime pay is crucial for supporting farmworkers because it discourages employers from overworking employees. By reducing situations of overwork, farmworkers are more likely to have better health and to live longer lives. In addition to supporting a better quality of life, farmworkers should have the legal right to a living wage to pay for their living expenses. Currently these individuals are some of the lowest paid workers in Oregon. A median income of \$28,000 a year is not a livable wage!

It is crucial for Oregonians and the legislators who represent the people of Oregon to demonstrate that they care for the wellbeing of farmworkers—to recognize their existence, right to a good life, and their dignity and wellbeing. California already has an overtime law that could serve as an example for how Oregon also can take bold steps to support the people whose labor makes daily life possible for us all. Please show up for farmworkers by supporting a farmworker overtime bill in the 2022 Legislative Session that implements the right to a fair wage as soon as possible. Thank you!

Sincerely,



Catalina M. de Onís, PhD
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Assistant Professor, University of Colorado Denver (online)
Salem, OR resident