

Submitter: Paul Skeen

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB4002

My name is Paul Skeen, and I farm in Nyssa, Malheur County, OR. Our county is the largest onion growing county in the United States. I raise 8 different crops on about 1400 acres and employ 28 people throughout my season. HB2004 would be the most aggressive overtime policy in the country, which will be devastating for local farmers and our employees. As a farmer, I cannot simply increase the 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 the added overhead. Oregon already has one of the highest minimum wages in the nation, and I do not have one employee that is only earning minimum wage. We are already paying more than most of our competition. To stay in business, I will be forced to limit the number of hours worked by our employees to 40 hours to avoid the added expense of overtime pay. I do not want to do this, and our employees do not want me to be forced into doing this. My employees are loyal, hardworking and have been with me for a long time. They can enjoy a good life with the hours they can work here at the wages they are paid. We will be forced to mechanize operations, transition to less labor-intensive crops, and even downsize to stay in business. I will be forced to let good employees go because of this bill that you profess will be for their good. You are taking away their jobs. As a family business we cannot operate at a loss year-over-year. This bill will negatively impact family farms and ranches, and also our wonderful agricultural workers. Please oppose HB2004.