

Submitter: Steve Vangrunsven

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB4002

Did you know the blueberry processors that pay overtime have a hard time finding labor. That is because the many workers can make more money picking the fruit. Fruit pickers are guaranteed minimum wage but are paid by the pound. Good pickers can make more than \$35 per hour.

These are just some of the jobs that I am familiar with in Washington and surrounding counties. Other regions of our state have different seasonal work.

Here are some questions that I have asked a few farm employees in the past few week.

Which would you rather have? As many hours as you want at your current wage. Your current wage and be only allowed to work 40 hours in a week. Be paid less per hour than your current wage but receive overtime. Most like current laws that allow them to work more hours and make more money. They know if they receive overtime then they will also most likely receive fewer hours.

Would you like a \$2 per hour raise or new equipment? Majority of the employees choose the new equipment. Keep in mind the new tractor or irrigation system makes the job easier for the employees, but costs the farmer much more than a raise would. Would you rather have farm benefits or overtime pay? Everyone chose the benefits. Over a period of time some of these would most likely go away if the cost of an employee were to increase due to overtime compensation. I consider farm benefits as something that other industries can't or won't provide. Most dairies provide beef to their employees. Some farms offer on farm housing at well under market rent, usually with utilities included. Many farms provide transportation for employees. Use of equipment for the employees small farm. Feed for an employees livestock. Hunting/fishing rights. Firewood to sell as a side job.

You may think of seasonal jobs as something someone does for a month or two and then is unemployed. In agriculture there is always a season happening. Many seasonal employees work 12 months of the year. Some choose which seasons they like best. I think one thing that all of the seasonal employees have in common is there is full time work when they want it.

“Seasonal jobs”

December/January/February: pruning berries, hazelnuts, and grapes

March/April: spot spray weeds and bait mice in grass seed fields

April/May: transplanting vegetables, hoeing/roguing grass seed fields

June-August: berry, broccoli, and rhubarb harvest; irrigation

September/October: pumpkin and grape harvest

October-December: wreath making (cutting greenery in woods and assembly in

factory), Christmas tree harvest These don't include the processing and/or warehouse jobs that many seasonal employees take to fill some gaps.

I strongly suggest that before advancing this legislation you consider the long term affects it could have. I feel this legislation will negativity affect the agriculture industry in Oregon. Even worse I think it will negatively affect those employees that you think you are helping.

Thanks,
Steve