

Submitter: Anne Krahmer-Steinkamp

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB4002

I am a 6th generation farmer here in Oregon, farming with my father and brother. We farm year round keeping our blueberries growing and healthy. Our harvest season only lasts 8-12 weeks, and that's if the summer heat or the rains don't take out the crop. I employ 15 employees year round and 150 to 200 seasonal employees, many of whom come back to my farm year after year. I want to share with you my concerns about the real impacts of HB 4002 on both my farm and my employees.

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.

My pickers average \$18 to \$20 per hour picking, my top pickers \$25 to \$30 per hour. Most of my hourly employees are above minimum wage. The ones at minimum wage are first job ever employees. All of my full time guys get a year end bonus and we also give a small harvest bonus to the hourly season workers too.

I will not be able to afford the added payroll costs proposed in HB 4002, as it will likely cost me at least \$350,000 to \$500,000 in new labor costs. To stay in business, I will be forced to limit the number of hours worked by my employees to 40 hours in a week to avoid the added expense of overtime pay. I do not want to do this, and my employees do not want me to do this, but that is the practical reality of these bills.

Hand picked fresh fruit is the best you can find on the market but with this bill I will be competing with Michigan, New Jersey, North Carolina and Canada which all have lower wages than Oregon. All these also have no overtime but Canada which after 48 hours has an overtime added on. Colorado has a bill with ag overtime with better hour terms than this Oregon bill.

The blueberry industry has been in a low price markets for about 10 years. I have seen 2 of my neighbors with blueberries close down in the blueberry industry. My last blueberry neighbor is holding on by threads just like me.

I would ask you to ask yourselves "are you ready to kill family farms, and let the big corporate farms take over?" That's the reality of this bill for me! Please don't follow the same as California and Washington!