



Date: 2/8/2022

To: House Committee on Business and Labor

From: Jill Pham, Executive Director, Portland Jobs with Justice

Re: Support for Farmworker Overtime

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

My name is Jill Pham, and I'm writing on behalf of Portland Jobs with Justice. Portland Jobs with Justice is a coalition of over 100 faith, student, labor, and community groups working together to build a better and more just world.

I'm writing to you today to express my emphatic support for overtime pay after 40 hours worked in a week at one and one-half times pay.

Farmworkers endure harsh conditions in the fields so that people in our communities can feed themselves and their families. Without farmworkers, people would go hungry on an incomprehensible scale. It is without question that farmworkers deserve dignity, respect, and labor rights that are afforded to workers in nearly every other industry. Farmworkers have been without minimum wage protections, child labor laws, and overtime pay since before the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. Denying farmworkers these rights communicates that they are second class workers.

Many workers fought and died fighting for an eight hour work day during the time where workers were expected to work grueling 12+ hour days six days a week. Those standards today are seen as inhumane, so why are farmworkers not afforded the same rights? A tangible way to recognize their sacrifices is giving them the basic rights to overtime pay after 40 hours at one and one-half times pay.

In the face of a deadly pandemic and unprecedented heat, farmworkers showed up to work each day. A farmworker tragically lost their life and it was preventable. But that issue is just one slice of the larger problem that is the undignified treatment of farmworkers. I am outraged that I even have to say that farmworkers deserve a living wage, let alone overtime pay that nearly every other hourly worker is entitled to. Farmworkers work so that people can feed their families. Farmworkers deserve that too.

I urge you to pass farmworker overtime in the 2022 Legislative Session to ensure farmworkers in Oregon are paid fairly for their skilled and essential labor.

Sincerely,

Jill Pham
Executive Director
Portland Jobs with Justice