

Submitter: Kyenne Williams

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB4002

8 February 2022

To: House Committee on Business and Labor

From: Kyenne Williams

Re: Support for Farmworker Overtime

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

My name is Kyenne Williams and I live in Portland. While I don't have a farm, I was born in Eugene and grew up in Lincoln County and spent the summers of my teen years picking strawberries and green beans in the Willamette Valley to earn money to buy school clothes. That personal experience over several impressionable years is only ONE of the reasons I am writing to you today in support of farmworker overtime. After 45 plus years working for pay, I believe farm workers should receive overtime pay after 40 hours in a workweek at one and one-half times the employee's regular rate of pay. As a citizen, as well as a food activist, I realize that this will impact agriculture as a whole in Oregon, but it is our responsibility to move agriculture forward in a fair and just manner.

Since those early summers in the fields, I have put my own roots down in the Portland region as a gardener, and local farmer's market volunteer (on boards as well as setting up markets on the weekend) I know how hard farmers work, how little control they have over many of the circumstances they work under (weather, market price, etc.). We need them - as humans, to eat!

-Farmworkers deserve labor rights as well as dignity and respect. There is no reason to continue to exclude them from minimum wage protections, child labor laws, and overtime pay. They aren't second-class workers and deserve the same rights as the rest of workers.

-Exclusion from overtime pay requires farmworkers to work many hours without having time to spend more time with their families or tend to other responsibilities,  
- The people who feed us (my fellow humans) deserve a living wage to pay for their living expenses.

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,

Kyenne Williams

Voter

Citizen

Gardener

Eater!