

Submitter: Kate Patterson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB4002

I am against the HB 4002 for many reasons. As being an active agriculturalist I find it quit appalling that our state is trying to make farmers and ranchers suffer because of wages. My family has been farming for 2 generations and there have been so many hard ships. As the price of fuel, equipment, taxes, and production costs have went up the last thing we as farmers and ranchers need to worry about is employee wages. The average farmer or ranchers does not have the ability to hire enough people as is. People that understand this will realize that the efforts put towards food production for our state and country is not easy. The agriculture industry is not your average 9-5 job that you get to go to in the morning and get off in the evenings with weekends off. There is always things that need done such as tending to crops and animals. What most people do not realize is that the agriculture industry is what keeps every person, animal, and plant alive. There are so many farms/ranches that cannot afford to employ people because of the cost of wages. If this bill were to pass there would be no reason for any farmer or rancher to continue their business because the employee wages would run us out of business. I currently work for a 5th generation sheep and cattle ranch out of lone Oregon where we hire Shepherders. The Herders come from Peru and have no expenses while they are here. They are provided a phone so they can call their families back home, a very modern camp trailer with all of the necessities, groceries, and travel expenses. The cattle and sheep industries provide more than just renewable food, they are also a fiber source. The herders have very minimal job duties. They are here to protect the sheep, move them when needed, and make sure they are in good health. Most days herders spend their time shopping on eBay, talking to family, making a meal, and napping. Herders are a very important asset to a sheep ranch and without them there would be no incentive to raise sheep because no single rancher has time to just tend sheep all day long. There are so many roles that each person plays on a ranch and one cannot do everything. As this bill comes to our attention, it is making it harder and harder to be able to provide for a growing population. With wages being high in general paying employees overtime would not be suitable and could potentially put farms and ranches out of business. Therefore less food production and less taxpayers. Don't bite the hand that feeds you.

Thank you,
Kate Patterson