

Date: February 8, 2022
To: House Committee on Business and Labor
From: Pam Gordon
Re: Support for Farmworker Overtime

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

My name is Pam Gordon, and I live in Corvallis. I am writing to you today in support of farmworker overtime. Farmworkers should receive overtime pay after 40 hours in a workweek at one and one-half times the employee's regular rate of pay. Federal and state overtime laws and rules should apply to all farmworkers.

Farmworkers have been excluded from the minimum wage protections, child labor laws, and overtime pay since the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. This is an exclusion that has gone on for way too long.

Farmworkers are treated as second-class workers and deserve the same work rights as the rest of our profession's and industry's workers. They deserve to be treated humanely and with respect to their health and on the job risks of injury. Before 1938, employers overworked workers even to the point of death. Last summer, in blistering heat, one of our farmworkers was overworked and died without access to shade, hydration, and safety practices and standards.

Farmworkers should be able to spend more time with their friends and families, or tend to other responsibilities, instead of spending most of their life at work. They get up in the middle of the night to work over 12 hours each day, 6 or 7 days a week. This leaves them exhausted with no time or energy to do anything other than shower, eat and go to sleep when they get home.

Farmworkers are some of the lowest paid workers in Oregon with a median income of \$28,000 a year. According to an enumeration study by Oregon State University, overtime pay would extend to over 86,000 farmworkers. As a resident of Oregon, it is humiliating to me that we make farmworkers so hard for so little. We owe them more support and value than we currently give them.

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,

Pam Gordon
Registered Nurse