

February 7, 2022

To: Chair: Paul Holvey, Vice Chairs Daniel Bonham and Dacia Grayber, and
Members of the House Business and Labor Committee

From: Kathleen Brandon, Member American Association of University Women of Oregon,
Ashland

I am writing this letter in support of House Bill 4002: Requiring Overtime for Farmworkers.

I am a retired American History and Civics teacher and am very familiar with the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 and the legacy of racism that it represented. The legislation, signed into law by President Franklin Roosevelt, targeted people of color and sought to sustain unfair and discriminatory employment practices and compensation. The “deal” with Southern senators and congressmen was designed to maintain a system of harsh conditions and poverty wages for Black workers at the time. In 2022, most of the farmworkers are from Latin American countries and the Caribbean and they are not just men, but women. The discrimination continues.

Statistics show that most agricultural workers work 55 hours a week and bring home an income of \$15,000 to 17,499 a week to support their family. These “essential workers,” toiling for long hours, are susceptible to injury and exhaustion without overtime compensation. Women farmworkers are further challenged by responsibilities of children and households. Data also shows that Latina women are at the bottom of the pay scale and respect in their employment.

House Bill 4002 seeks to remedy this inequity by phasing in overtime payments of time and a half for work over 40 hours by 2026. In my opinion, and as a member of AAUW, this proposed legislation is the right thing to do for those that help put food on our tables and deserve equal treatment by legislation as other workers in our economy.

Respectfully,

Kathleen Brandon
Ashland, Oregon
AAUW Branch