

Date: February 8, 2022

To: House Committee on Business and Labor
From: Rosalie Pedroza
Re: Support for Farmworker Overtime

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

My name is Rosalie Pedroza, and I live in Turner in a rural part of Marion County. 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.

When I was 12 years old, I worked during the summer picking strawberries in Hood River. I met the bus at 5:00 in the morning and by the time we got to the fields, it was close to 7:00. There were families already in the fields when we arrived. When the sun got hottest around 1:00 in the afternoon, all of us kids were gathered up for an ice cream and taken home. It is grueling work from the cold mornings until the day's heat. At that time there was no water available to drink, the outhouse was built over a hole in the ground, and there was nowhere to wash up. The other families were there until sundown. I did this work for 4 summers. The other families moved on to other jobs like picking cherries, pears, and apples. Some were lucky enough to get a cannery job but the bulk continued to do field work from sun up until sun down.

For far too long, farm workers have been denied the dignity, respect, and labor rights most other workers take for granted. They have been excluded from minimum wage laws, child labor laws, and overtime pay since 1938 when the Fair Labor Standards Act was passed. This past year, when no one should have been outside working in temperatures in the 100s, we saw workers literally worked to death. These are hard working human beings without whom we would not have food on our tables. No worker should have to go to work to die such a torturous death who is just trying to take care of their family.

I believe that by passing this overtime bill, it would make farmers think twice about overworking these workers who so clearly are vital to their success. Treating human beings humanely and valuing the work they do, should be something all of us aspire to.

Please pass HB 4002 Farm Workers Overtime.

Sincerely,

Rosalie Pedroza
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