



Representative Bobby Levy

Serving Umatilla, Union & Wallowa Counties

Chair Holvey, Vice-Chairs Bonham and Grayber, members of the House Committee on Business and Labor. My name is Bobby Levy and I represent House District 58, which consists of Umatilla, Union and Wallowa counties.

However, what makes me who I am in life is that I am a farmer and rancher.

I'm testifying in opposition to HB 4002 because I firmly believe that this bill will limit my ability to provide additional and meaningful benefits and compensation to the employees who work for me, including scholarships, housing, transportation, and more. For the 95% of family farms and producers in the state, HB 4002 will cut jobs, cut hours, and cut out the ability for small business to do work in Oregon.

I want to distinguish between two different operations I have back home to explain how a one-size fits-all approach does not work for the agriculture industry, even within the same type of livestock production. At my home in Echo, we have 100 head of sheep and during lambing, that goes up to 300.

I hire college students to help take care of sheep, guardian dogs and farming operations. They learn all about animal husbandry as well as farming and conservation practices. We work around our students' class schedules, give them yearly scholarships to college, provide a work truck for their use, and pay well above minimum wage. If you raise any sort of livestock, you are well aware that it is not a 9-5 operation—unfortunately, ewes don't only birth lambs during business hours. If HB 4002 is passed as written, we will not be able to financially provide all of these extra benefits to the hardworking college students who we rely on, and who rely on us.

Whereas we only have 100 sheep at the house, we have a much larger operation at the ranch. At the ranch, we employ H-2A workers. And for those that don't know, H-2A is a federal visa program for temporary agricultural workers—where the employees can reapply for the visa every 3 years. Our employees have been reapplying to work for us for over 25 years. For our H-2A workers, we provide individual camp trailers, all of their food, clothing, and transportation, as well as all of their medical care. The employees we've hired come back year after year, and some have even had their children come and work for us. They are our family and we treat them the absolute best that we can.

Ranching, or any other livestock production business, is dictated by the animal and the work needed to be done—not the governing laws of labor. Imagine being pregnant and going into labor—just for the doctor to say at the 11th hour: “I'm sorry, I'm not cleared for any overtime hours so I need to clock out.” It would be absolutely ridiculous! Now, imagine a ewe is having a difficult birth and you tell your employees, “I'm sorry—we don't make enough to pay you overtime hours. I'm going to need you to leave.” Despite how crass these examples are, they are absolute possibilities if HB 4002 is passed. Because when your profit margin is dictated by a

global market, it's already difficult enough to plan for the future. This will just be another obstacle in making ag work in Oregon.

But beyond our own business profit-margins, I'm worried that if HB 4002 passes, as written, that these additional benefits and accommodations we provide for our employees will no longer be feasible for our at-home or at-ranch operations. In each instance, we cater to the needs of our workers and in response, we get loyal and hardworking employees. HB 4002 ultimately hurts our employees and I urge the committee to think long and hard about all of the ramifications of ag overtime—how it will affect our state, how it will affect our businesses, and how it will negatively affect ag employees in the future.

Representative Bobby Levy, HD58

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bobby Levy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal tail on the "y".