

Good afternoon gentlemen and representatives of the House Committee on Business and Labor. My name is Juan Monje I am a community organizer for COMUNIDADES, and I represent the workers and their families living in the Gorge.

Serving the community, especially the immigrant community who works in the Gorge and who suffer daily injustices in the labor area. They have been essential workers who have worked during the pandemic and in unfavorable weather conditions such as heat waves or forest fires without protection from their employers and the government.

Many say that agriculture is not a specialized job. This is a false narrative because not just anyone can trim trees. A bad cut can cause serious damage to the tree which means the orchard owner loses a lot of money. To prune properly, it is important to understand the proper techniques for each tree.

Let me share the testimony of one of our community members. They were living in a cabin which is a very small house, where they had to share bathrooms located outside. The wife became pregnant last winter, and when they found out, they were kicked out of the cabin from one day to the next. They had no place to live, some friends got them a house, a house with broken windows, with snow falling, all the cold coming in, and her being pregnant, she won't forget that.

That's why I want them to be paid overtime, for all the injustices they suffer and not in five years but in three.

Thank you for your time.