

Submitter: Barbara Isaacman  
On Behalf Of: COIN Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network  
Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor  
Measure: HB4002

My name is Barbara Isaacman, and I live in Portland. I am writing on behalf of COIN (Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network), a network of Indivisible groups located throughout the Oregon. Our organization and the individual members work to improve the living conditions of all citizens and to ensure that our government works for all of us.

Our organization endorsed this legislation in the 2021 legislative session and were very upset that it failed to pass. We continue to endorse it today, with the caveat that you shorten the period for the implementation of the overtime pay requirement. Immediate action is necessary because agricultural workers, who have been essential during the COVID pandemic and before, have been suffering since their original exclusion from receipt of overtime pay over 80 years ago.

As all of you are aware, this exclusion of farmworkers from receiving overtime pay was racist and that racism continues until today. It is no coincidence that those excluded from receipt of this benefit are immigrants and people of color.

Farmworkers have been excluded for too long from minimum wage protections, child labor laws, and overtime pay. They are non second-class workers, and they deserve the same rights that other workers have.

As I listened to the testimony of those opposing farmworkers' right to overtime pay, it was laced with paternalism and their treatment by their employers as children rather than as adults who dream of improving their lives and the lives of their families.

The overtime law was created to discourage employers from overworking their employees. As the farmers' and ranchers' testimony made clear, their entire system is based on overworking their employees. Such overwork leads to poorer health and shorter life expectancies. It also makes it impossible for them to spend time with their families, which all workers need.

Farmworkers are some of the lowest paid workers in Oregon, and they deserve a living wage to pay for their living expenses. The provision of overtime pay beginning immediately upon this bill's passage is the best way to ensure this.

Farmworkers put food on our tables. Certainly, they deserve to make enough money to put food on theirs.

I urge you to pass farmworker overtime in this session to ensure that they, like other Oregonians, are paid fairly for their essential labor.

Thank you.

Barbara Isaacman  
Member, COIN Legislative Committee