



Service Employees International Union – Oregon State Council

February 9, 2022

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 4002 for farmworker overtime. My name is Alberto Gallegos and I am here on behalf of SEIU Oregon, which is composed of SEIU Local 503 and SEIU Local 49; together representing over 85,000 workers.

Although our union does not represent farmworkers, we stand in solidarity with them—not only because it is the right thing to do, but also—because we understand that when we lift up one group of workers, we are, in fact, lifting up all workers in our state. We believe that every worker deserves to be paid fairly for their work and have healthy working conditions no matter what work they do, where they come from, the color of their skin, what language they speak, and if they're in a union or not.

Unfortunately, farmworkers have been historically excluded from minimum wage protections and overtime pay. They are often underpaid and exploited for their cheap labor. Most are not able to adequately support themselves or their families; they do not have healthcare coverage through their employer; and they often live in AND work in unacceptable conditions which has a negative impact on their physical and mental health. In the past couple of years, these conditions have only gotten worse with the wildfires, heatwaves, and the ongoing pandemic.

There is no doubt that farmworkers were essential workers prior to the pandemic and they're essential now. As a society, we are quick to call people heroes and essential, but slow to help them when they need it. Farmworkers deserve our respect; they deserve to be protected; and they **deserve overtime pay after 40 hours a week at 1.5x their regular pay rate as quickly as possible.**

For too long, Farmworkers have been excluded from labor improvements. That needs to end. SEIU Oregon supports this bill and we urge you to vote yes on HB 4002.

Thank you,

Alberto Gallegos
Political and Government Relations Organizer
SEIU, Oregon State Council