

Submitter: Brian Glaser  
On Behalf Of: Oppose HB 4002  
Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor  
Measure: HB4002

I farm in Linn County. My family farm is a fourth generation farm raising many different crops, including grass seeds, oil seed crops, vegetable crop seeds, small grains and other specialty seeds. Many of the seeds I grow are used as cover crops for building soil health, sequestering carbon and protecting the many green spaces this country enjoys. My family farm employs up to twelve employees during peak season, many of whom come back to my farm year after year. I am concerned about the impact that HB 4002, the ag overtime proposal, would have on my farm and employees. I do everything I can to compensate employees fairly, but as a family farmer, I am a price taker. This means that I cannot increase the sale price of my crops when labor costs increase. Consumers in the global commodity market set our prices. Any added costs will have to be absorbed by my family's farm. That's the economic reality for my family farm and all of us in agriculture.

Oregon's specialty crops are labor intensive and have peak seasonal needs. This bill will cost me hundreds of thousands of dollars in new labor costs that my family farm can't afford. To remain in business, I will be forced to limit the number of hours that employees work to 40 hours per week, mechanize or transition to less labor-intensive crops to avoid the added expense of overtime pay. I do not want to do this, but that is will be my practical reality if you pass this bill.

Farmers have been clear about the consequences of this policy, but I'm also worried that farm employees will see their paychecks reduced or jobs cut if overtime pay is required after 40-hours. The other unintended consequences for employees will be reduce or no seasonal and year end bonuses, use of a vehicle, no large time off in non peak seasons to be with their families.

As a family business, we can't operate at a loss year-over-year. Mandating overtime after 40-hours demands wages that are not possible with the economics of agriculture and will result in reduced pay and opportunities for farm employees. Only seven states have adopted ag overtime policies, and most have crafted policies that ensure that local farms can remain viable and that employees' jobs and paychecks are protected. Several states have adopted policies to meet seasonal needs and others established higher overtime thresholds that help avoid some of the worst consequences.

Thank you for your time addressing this issue. As a family farm who may lose the opportunity for my kids, the fifth generation on this land, to farm, I urge you to oppose an overtime mandate at 40-hours in HB 4002.

Sincerely,

Brian Glaser