

Submitter: Renae Corn  
On Behalf Of: Oppose HB 4002  
Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor  
Measure: HB4002

February 3, 2022

My Name is Renae Corn; my husband Bruce and I farm in the Nyssa-Ontario Oregon area. We grow sugar beets, onions, corn and wheat; farming land that has been farmed by our family since 1938. We haven't always owned the farms we grow crops on. We have worked extremely hard and been fair with others around us. We currently farm around 1200 acres. We have two employees that we pay year around. We also employ 2 others for about 6-8 months a year and about 15 others as needed during weeding and harvest seasons. We are very concerned about the impact that HB4002, the Ag overtime bill could have on our operation.

We are good to our employees and treat them fairly. That is why we have several that return year after year to work for us.

Our main employee doesn't work in the winter months but still receives paychecks. We allow for time off for family trips and illness. The picture that was painted last night was one of employers working poor people with little or no concern for their ability to provide for their families. We do not now nor have we ever been in that category!

We believe that HB4002 to be flawed in the mandatory overtime pay for Ag employees. We ask for more cooperation from lawmakers and farm groups to come together with a fair for employees and employers update on compensation.

Some at the hearing last night commented how Ag employers always are crying that this will break them. Ag commodities prices have been historically high in the recent years. The minimum wage increases also occurred at the same time. We cannot rely on that to be the case in the future. Unfortunately farmers and ranchers do not set the prices they receive for goods they produce. We cannot increase the sale price of our 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 those of us in agriculture.

This bill will cost our farm thousands extra in labor costs. In other industries it is possible for shift work. But in our industry our irrigators need to follow up twice a day with how the water is running. Just this past year we saw the devastating damage that can happen when water isn't properly tended due to someone who is in experienced not understanding how to manage it!

You may be forcing farmer to limit the number of hours that employees work to 40 hours per week. In agriculture it is difficult to have different workers for shifts. We are talking about trying to stretch manpower as it has been extremely difficult to even get people to work on the farms. Now you are looking at enacting legislation that could make it even more difficult.

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 hours cut as well as end of year bonuses.

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.

As someone who stands to lose their family business, I urge you to oppose an overtime mandate at 40-hours in HB 4002.

Respectively Submitted

Renaë Corn