

Submitter: Brette Wagstaff

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Business and Labor

Measure: HB4002

Brette Wagstaff, WBH Farms Nyssa, Oregon

Thank you for the time spent listening to testimonies last night. Stating my stance against HB 4002.

We agree that our employees are very essential. Our farm cannot function without work, mine work included. I was so frustrated hearing words like "forced" and "made" to do work employees didn't want to do. On my farm, there is no forcing anyone to do anything. Everyone works together with one goal in mind: a plentiful harvest and the fruits of that labor.

Does that mean every job is our favorite? No. As a whole we enjoy what we do. Farming is a nearly year round labor intensive occupation. There are days when the weather is adverse and we still have to be out there. We don't pay over time but we do supply housing and a pickup with gas they don't pay for, to use at work and for personal uses. I allow employees to go to lunch and not check out. These kinds of choices made for the benefit of my employees are the things that keep generations of good help coming back for work year after year. I am right beside my employees. I don't ask them to do things I am not willing to do. We are working toward the same goal.

Last night I heard a lot about employees time away from family functions... that's every job. We all make efforts to support our families in the best way. Sometimes that is heading to a ball game, while other times it is required to finish jobs. In our area, we are friends and our kids play sports together. I allow them to go to the game while still on the clock because I understand the value of families verse paying bills. The picture that was painted that all farmers treat their employees badly or force them to do certain jobs. I'm sorry that people have to deal with those terrible conditions but please don't punish my employees because other employers are not good people. This punishment is that if HB 4002 was to be put into action, that I would have to move to automation in many areas of my farm. With the amount of people we employ, especially around harvest, I will not be able to pay these good people year after year. The benefits and perks would disappear and my ability to employ more than the bare minimum of people would go with it.

I have a lot of areas that I could automate and I will, to survive. I don't want to tell those that I depend on and stand next to, that I have to cap their hours because I simply can't afford to pay the time. HB 4002 will hurt our area, farmers and employees. My employees are paid over the county average and some on a 3rd grade education. They have made a life for themselves. Don't take their employment away.

Another group of people that will greatly suffer are high school kids. I offer summer

jobs just to help them out. With all the time I spend teaching and fixing issues it isn't too much benefit to me. But I think it teaches them the good value of work. I can't afford to pay time and a half for the 2 weeks they are hired- especially counting summer camps and dates and the fun things kids should do in the summer. So they can save of some money for a new car or college, let me allow them this opportunity. Let me help my community. Farmers especially in my area are part of very small towns. We all succeed or digress together, whether you own the farm or just work there. I am a third generation farmer and hope to keep it going so that I can hand it down to my sons. Please for the sake of my whole area, vote against on HB 4002.