

LISA REYNOLDS, MD
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
District 36



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 9th, 2022

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

Thank you for taking the time to listen to so many impassioned voices on this issue. I write to you today in firm support of HB 4002 and call on you to finally give farmworkers the dignity they deserve - and the dignity that every other hourly worker in Oregon already receives.

Farmworkers are so crucial to our everyday lives. Oregon's agricultural sector is a key part of our economy and our identity, and depends on the work of countless hourly laborers. These farmworkers toil long hours in often harsh conditions (especially with climate change leading to increasing severity of wildfires, air quality issues, extreme heat, and winter storms) to ensure we all have quality, affordable produce in our stores.

There's been a lot of talk recently about supporting essential workers. It's hard to find a worker more essential than those who provide the very food we eat, and the best way to support them is by paying them a living wage with the same protections that other Oregonians receive: the right to overtime pay after 40 hours worked. Oregon's farmworkers consist of many more immigrants and people of color than Oregon's population as a whole, and systematically denying this group the added benefits of overtime pay stands in our way of building social mobility and equity here in Oregon.

As a practicing pediatrician in Washington County, many of patients' parents are farmworkers. I see the toll that long hours take on their well being. Apart from the physical and mental stress that hours of strenuous manual labor takes on a person, the long hours can prevent parents from being able to bring their kids in to the doctor. And, their lack of appropriate compensation for those hours worked can impact their ability to afford their basic needs, such as food, housing, and childcare. This is not just a labor issue - it's an issue of health and human decency.

I strongly urge you to listen to the voices of Oregon's farmworkers and vote yes on HB 4002.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Reynolds". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Representative Lisa Reynolds, MD