

Submitter: Penny Krebs

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Farm Worker Overtime

Measure: HB4002

We have a long time sheep business where we grow wool and protein for Oregon and America. We have advertised for shepherds continually but no one in America is interested in herding sheep on the range lands anymore. Keep in mind the people that used to do this job were usually alcoholics that couldn't stay away from liquor, or people who didn't want to be part of society for one reason or another. Being secluded kept them from alcohol abuse, or away from people. Those people now are most likely our current homeless people that panhandle for drug or alcohol money and do not fit in to society.

In order to stay in this business we have to have these types of animals herded. Much of where they are is on open range and sheep are an easy target for predators. Wolves, coyotes, cougars and loose dogs are addicted to killing sheep. Once they kill they will be back for more. Its very fun and instinctual to chase and kill.

We pay our herders well. Our current shepherders come from Peru and are vetted through a private company and come through on a H2A visa program. They have no expenses while they are here. Housing, food, most clothing, all utilities is all paid for by our ranch. These men pay taxes and they send their money home to Peru. They send their children to college and build homes for family members with the money they earn here. The American dollar goes much further in Peru.

But I must say, the work a shepherder does is very intermittent. They get up early to get the sheep out to graze. They come back in and drink coffee and make breakfast. Later they may ride around on a 4 wheeler and see if there are predator kills. They take a long nap in the afternoon while the sheep are grazing. By 7:00 pm they drive out and get them closer to the camp wagon, feed the herding dogs and eat some dinner. They have cell phones and TV's almost everywhere they are. They have Facebook pages and call home when they want. They socialize with each other and are in contact with us all the time. We go out almost daily but a minimum of three rimes per week.

These people are valuable to us. We could not be in this business if we did not have them. But a pay raise like over time would put us right out of the business.

Sheep grazing is a valuable business to Oregon. Keeping open spaces could not be possible with out herders. Fencing would be needed and more money and work needed to do that. Weed and invasive species are kept at a minimum through grazing while also reducing fuels for wildfires by reducing fire causing fuels.

Thank you,
Penny Krebs