



February 24, 2022

Co-Chair Taylor, Co-Chair Holvey, and Members of the Joint Committee On Farm Worker Overtime,

My name is Jeanine Morales, on behalf of Pro-Choice Oregon, we would like to provide the following support for HB 4002. At Pro-Choice Oregon, our advocacy is centered on defending and expanding access to the full spectrum of reproductive health care, including an equity-centered approach to increasing healthy pregnancy outcomes and ensuring all families can thrive. We believe that everyone in Oregon must have access to a safe environment and conditions in which they can raise their families. We also understand that we cannot achieve reproductive equity or justice until all communities are protected from exploitation and systemic harms. When workers are not adequately compensated, or subject to wage theft of overtime payments, many people who can become pregnant are unable to access health care and other necessary resources to care for their families. Such injustices are exacerbated in the case of female and gender diverse farm workers who face unique additional challenges compared to male farm workers, including sexual harassment, pregnancy and gender discrimination, and additional responsibilities in caring for children¹. We urge you to support the dignity and health of farmworker families by voting in favor of HB 4002.

Farmworkers continue to be impacted by the legacy of the discriminatory Federal Labor Standards Act of 1938², which excluded agricultural workers from overtime payment. Farmworkers experience poverty at a higher rate than other salary and hourly workers in Oregon, making one-third of the state average household income, thus making it incredibly difficult to support and provide for a family³. Supporting HB 4002 guarantees overtime pay to agricultural workers after 40 hours in a workweek at one and one-half times the employee's regular rate of pay.

The CDC and National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health rank agriculture among one of the most hazardous professions, yet many workers and their families do not have healthcare coverage through their employer⁴. As a result, migrant and seasonal farmworkers experience

1 Women in Agriculture, National Farm Worker Ministry, 2018, <https://nfwm.org/farm-workers/farm-workerissues/womens-issues/>.

2 Farm Workers and the Fair Labor Standards Act: Racial Discrimination in the New Deal, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2205898

3 Farm Workers and the Fair Labor Standards Act: Racial Discrimination in the New Deal, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2205898

4 Agricultural Safety, CDC: The National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety, <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/aginjury/default.html>



higher rates of serious and untreated health concerns, including COVID-19, wildfire related PTSD, depression, long-term stress, and heart disease⁵. Inadequate overtime compensation exacerbates financial barriers and access to healthcare, including for preventive, reproductive health, and family planning care and services⁶.

Guaranteeing farm workers overtime pay will positively impact Oregonians by guaranteeing families a decent standard of living, **thus creating economic stability to a class of workers who have been excluded from basic labor standards such as minimum wage, collective bargaining rights, and overtime pay.** During the time of COVID-19, with better wages, there will be an increase in consumer spending, especially in local businesses and rural communities. We urge you to follow the precedent set by California and Washington to vote YES on HB 4002 to ensure farmworkers in Oregon are adequately paid for their labor.

Sincerely,

Jeanine Morales
Deputy Director, Pro-Choice Oregon



⁵ "California Wildfire Exposure, Vulnerability, and Mental Health: Who Gets to Recover and Who Does Not?", Afzal, 2021, <https://psyarxiv.com/qs2a8/>

⁶ "How Are Income and Wealth Linked to Health and Longevity?," Urban Institute and Center on Society and Health, <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/49116/2000178-How-are-Income-and-Wealth-Linked-to-Health-and-Longevity.pdf>