

Submitter: Lydia Contreras
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Farm Worker Overtime
Measure: HB4002

Date: February 24th, 2022
To: Joint Committee on Farmworker Overtime
From: Lydia Contreras
Re: Support for HB 4002-Farmworker Overtime

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

My name is Lydia Contreras, and I live in Woodburn. I am writing to you in support of farmworker overtime on behalf of the children who've been affected by this. I, myself, am the daughter of two hard working farm workers. I'm also the teacher to many first graders whose parents work in the fields.

Farmworkers should receive overtime pay after 40 hours in a workweek at one and one-half times the employee's regular rate of pay. Growing up I saw my dad and mom work long hours as well as different schedules all with the purpose to provide the best for my sister and I. The trauma, stress and challenges I encountered while going through that has motivated me to do well in school, and have the ambition to increase my level of education. However, this isn't the case for many students, who need more support to be successful academically. That was my sister's case who had an Individual Education Plan (IEP.) I saw my parents miss work yearly in order to attend her meetings with teachers. Having both miss work only meant we'd be short on money for that month.

As a first grade teacher, I am writing on behalf of all my migrant students. I work in the Woodburn School District where many families live under the poverty line. I have many students who are currently at high risk, and in part it's because they had to do their kindergarten year online due to the pandemic, but in addition their caregivers haven't stopped working since March 2019 due to financial needs. These parents/families stay working late and sometimes even work weekends. Exclusion from overtime pay requires farmworkers to work many hours without having time to do other things. They don't spend much time with their children, and these kids begin growing up without a present adult which can cause behavior issues, and fall behind academically. Due to this, sometimes the education system labels them as "uncaring parents" when in reality they sacrifice their mental, physical and emotional health for their children. Overtime pay would give farmworkers more time outside of work to help raise their children.

Farmworkers deserve to be treated humanely. I urge you to vote Yes on HB 4002 to pass farmworker overtime in the 2022 Legislative Session to ensure farmworkers in Oregon are paid fairly for their skilled and essential labor.

Sincerely,

Lydia Contreras
Daughter of farm workers
1st grade teacher