



A STRONG VOICE FOR OREGON'S WORKERS

TO: Chair Taylor
Vice-Chair Bonham
Members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Business
FR: Tan Perkins, OR AFL-CIO
RE: *Testimony in Opposition of SB 622*

February 17, 2025

Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Bonham and members of the committee,

My name is Tan Perkins with the Oregon AFL-CIO, the statewide federation of labor unions representing over 300,000 working people in Oregon and a voice for all workers in the legislative process.

I am writing in opposition of SB 622 which would allow certain employers to not pay unemployment taxes on H2-A visa workers. We strongly believe that the H2-A visa program is deeply flawed and that many workers are unfairly exploited. All while incentivizes the use of temporary foreign labor at the expense of Oregon's farmworkers.

Revising the H2-A visa program is a larger conversation, but we know that many work in harsh conditions for very little pay. These workers play a huge role in our communities, put food on our table, and often go thankless. All the while, these workers pay into taxes, like social security, that they will never get to utilize. Just like these workers, their employers are paying into a system that they may not have to utilize, but does good for many others.

Unemployment insurance is a social safety net that benefits all in Oregon. We do not believe that employers should be able to decide to stop paying due to their specific circumstance. This same logic could be used to say that H2-A visa holders should not pay any of the taxes they currently do. If we start carving employers out of unemployment payments the solvent trust that thousands rely on could quickly crumble. Our systems work best when we all rely on each other, and help each other during our most difficult times.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify and we strongly urge you to oppose SB 622.

