

Testimony in Support of HB 3194
Oregon School Employees Association
March 2025

Chair Kropf, Vice Chairs Chotzen and Wallan, and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Cassidy Kotter, and I am a Government Relations Specialist with the Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA), which represents over 25,000 classified education professionals across Oregon. Our members include custodians, food service workers, bus drivers, instructional assistants, and many other dedicated staff who play a vital role in supporting the success of Oregon's students. We stand in strong support of HB 3194, which establishes shared liability for farmworker camp operations to ensure accountability and fair treatment of Oregon's agricultural workers and their families.

As a labor union committed to protecting the rights and dignity of working people, we recognize that farmworkers perform some of the most physically demanding and essential labor in our state, yet too often they are subjected to substandard living conditions in employer-provided housing. Even further, many of the children of these workers attend the schools where OSEA members work and witness firsthand the impact that unsafe and unhealthy housing has on their well-being, education, and development.

HB 3194 is a necessary step toward ensuring that all farmworker housing meets basic standards of safety and dignity. By holding both landowners and farmworker camp operators jointly and severally liable unless specific conditions are met, this bill helps close loopholes that have allowed landowners to evade responsibility for hazardous or unlivable conditions. This increased accountability will help ensure that the families of Oregon's farmworkers—who contribute so much to our communities and economy—are not forced to live in substandard and unsafe housing.

We know that when children have stable and healthy living environments, they are better able to succeed in school. Conversely, when students live in overcrowded, unsafe, or unsanitary conditions, it negatively impacts their ability to focus, learn, and thrive. Our members, who provide critical support in classrooms, cafeterias, and school transportation, see the direct consequences of inadequate housing on students every day. By improving housing conditions, HB 3194 supports the academic success and overall well-being of farmworker children, helping to create a more equitable future for all Oregon students.

OSEA urges the Legislature to pass HB 3194 to ensure that all farmworkers and their families are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve. Thank you for your time and your commitment to Oregon's working families.

Sincerely,
Cassidy Kotter
Oregon School Employees Association, Government Relations Specialist