



TO: House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards  
FROM: Rev. Connie Yost, President  
SUBJECT: Yes on HB 2548

Dear Chair Grayber, Vice-Chair Elmer, Vice-Chair Muñoz, and Members of the Committee,

I am the Rev. Connie Yost, President of Farm Worker Ministry Northwest. I represent the faith community and people of conscience in Oregon, who support and advocate for our essential farm workers.

I am writing in strong support of HB 2548 to create a Farmworker Standards Board in Oregon.

There are over 72,000 Oregon farm workers, who put food on our tables and contribute over \$6.4B to our state's economy, yet they experience poor working conditions and earn an average of just \$34,500 annually. Most farmworkers are immigrants from Mexico, Guatemala, and Central America, many of whom speak an Indigenous language.

HB 2548 will give historically excluded workers their first voice in setting industry standards with real enforcement power and accountability. The board will ensure access to fair wages, safe conditions, and protection from retaliation.

Cities and states across the country have proven that workforce standards boards work. These boards bring workers together with industry and public representatives to set meaningful standards, with real enforcement power to ensure accountability. From New York's farm laborers to Minnesota's nursing home staff to Seattle's domestic workers, these boards give workers the voice and protections they deserve and give our communities the essential food we need.

We must not base our economy on the exploitation of our farm workers! I have personally seen farm workers hard at work and heard the pride they take in doing a good job and providing for their families. Too often, I have heard their heartbreaking stories of unsafe working conditions, and seen the substandard housing they and their families must live in due to their poverty and immigration status. This is a national disgrace.

People of conscience in Oregon urge you to vote YES on HB 2548 to create a Farmworker Standards Board and give farm workers the ability to set standards for the industry. We must provide protections and support for our *truly essential* farm workers in Oregon.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Rev. Connie Yost, President  
Farm Worker Ministry Northwest