

Submitter: Edgar Brandt
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2548

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

I urge your YES on HB 2548.

For far too long, farmworkers have been denied essential labor protections under the National Labor Relations Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act. This unjust exclusion has resulted in farmworkers being some of the lowest-paid workers in our state, forced to endure unsafe and inadequate working conditions.

The creation of a Farmworker Standards Board is a powerful step toward correcting these historic injustices. It will give farmworkers a crucial say in shaping industry standards that reflect their needs and rights.

From 1981 to 2008 I served as a bilingual instructional assistant with kindergarten through grade 6 students in the Salem-Keizer School District, meeting with and working firsthand with farmworker children and their families. Listening to their stories, I became convinced that farmworkers need to have a voice to speak about their needs and labor rights. Workers want to collaborate with elected officials and members of the agriculture community to set standards for training, better conditions and safety accountability.

Farmworkers provide food for Oregonians, nursery stock for domestic and export use, feed for the livestock and dairy industries and more to support the state's multi-billion dollar agriculture economy. The Farmworker Standards Board will help provide fair and just conditions for farmworkers and their families.

I urge you to pass HB 2548.

Sincerely,
Edgar Brandt
Dallas, OR