

## **Testimony in Support of HB 2548**

Submitted by: Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA)

March 12, 2025

Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Elmer and Muñoz, 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). On behalf of OSEA, which represents over 25,000 classified staff across the state, we stand in strong support of HB 2548 with -2 amendments. This bill would establish a Workplace Standards Board for farmworkers in Oregon. As a labor union dedicated to advocating for the rights and well-being of workers, we recognize the urgent need for improved workplace standards in the agricultural sector, a cornerstone of Oregon's economy.

Farmworkers play a critical role in ensuring our communities are fed, yet they often face dangerous working conditions, low wages, and inadequate access to training and safety protections. These workers, many of whom are parents of the students OSEA members serve, deserve the same fundamental labor protections that other industries offer. HB 2548 -2 would allow a dedicated board to establish standards related to wages, health and safety, and training—raising protections beyond the current national standards set by Oregon OSHA and BOLI. This is a crucial step toward equity and justice for farmworkers.

Importantly, HB 2548 -2 also establishes a just cause standard for farmworkers, ensuring they receive the same protections against unjust termination that many other workers already enjoy. Just cause protections help create job stability, prevent wrongful firings, and provide workers with due process—critical safeguards for those in historically vulnerable positions. OSEA has long championed just cause protections, successfully securing them for classified school employees through SB 283 in the 2023 session. Extending these protections to farmworkers is a necessary step in promoting fair labor practices across all sectors.

Classified educators see firsthand the impact that economic insecurity and unsafe working conditions have on students and families. When parents are forced to work in hazardous conditions for inadequate pay, the stress and instability reverberate through the classroom. Students cannot thrive academically when their families are struggling to meet basic needs. By improving workplace standards for farmworkers, HB 2548 -2 will help strengthen Oregon's workforce and create healthier, more stable communities.

Furthermore, establishing a Workplace Standards Board will provide farmworkers with a voice in decisions that affect their safety and livelihoods. Too often, these essential workers are excluded from discussions that shape their working conditions. HB 2548-2 ensures that they have a seat at the table alongside industry stakeholders and worker advocates.

*The Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the AFL-CIO.*





## **Oregon School Employees Association**

[www.osea.org](http://www.osea.org)

**State Office:** 4735 Liberty Road S, Salem, OR 97302-5036 P: 800-252-6732, 503-588-0121 F: 503-588-8307

OSEA firmly believes that all workers deserve dignity, respect, and fair treatment on the job. We urge this committee to pass HB 2548 -2 and take a bold step toward ensuring that Oregon's farmworkers receive the protections they deserve. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Cassidy Kotter

Government Relations Specialist  
Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA)

*The Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) is an affiliate of  
the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the AFL-CIO.*

