

My name is Rosalva and I was a farm worker for over 5 years when I first moved to the US. As a farm worker there are challenges, we face day to day such as working long shifts, getting paid at a minimum pay rate and getting lay off for no reason. My husband, dad and many other family members and friends are farm workers, and I still see and live the challenges they face day by day. I'm writing to strongly support HB2548, which establishes the Agricultural Workforce Standards Board in Oregon.

I consider farm jobs as one of the hardest jobs due to the long hours they work (no matter if it rains, snows, or 100 degrees warm) as a farm worker they need to work enough hours to be able to cover their bills and put food on their tables. During summertime, most farmers need to finish up their picking up season and require employees to work long hours, which also gives them the opportunity to make a little extra money but of course being paid at a minimal pay rate. To me, working long hours means they're sacrificing their own time and energy to help their families, to spend less time with them and to increase the risk of facing health problems like stress, lack of sleep and unhealthy eating.

Being paid at a minimal pay rate has struggles as well. As farm workers, they don't have enough money to save for a retirement account. For instance, immigrants that will never be able to get a government retirement benefit will always have work. They'll always have to get up early every day to work, no matter what their age and circumstances are. Also, with a low pay rate they don't have enough money to pay for health insurance. Some employers don't offer health insurances, so if they get sick and if they don't get approved for discounts, they must pay out of pocket.

My dad worked for an X company for over 20 years. He used to work long shifts, sometimes 2 shifts during summertime. He spent most of the time working, and he used his free time to sleep and be prepared for the next day. He never refused to do anything he was asked to do at work. He was paid only a few cents over the minimum and never got paid for overtime. One day, he received his final paycheck with no reason for being fired. He got depressed because he put too much effort into keeping that job and in the end, he lost it for no reason.

For those and many other reasons, I'm supporting HB2548 and I'm asking the legislators who will vote for this bill to listen to our voices. We are all humans and deserve to treat the same as everyone else.

Thank you,

Rosalva

Wife and daughter of farm workers.