

Submitter: john zielinski

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2548

Chair Grayber, and Committee members,

I ask you to oppose HB 2548 which would essentially unionize all agricultural labor. And creates an unelected governing body with the authority to set increased regulations for Oregon farms at least every two years. Shouldn't the same labor standards apply across all industries and types of businesses in Oregon? Why is agriculture being singled out?

The unelected governing body could:

Set higher minimum wage (est. over \$20); Minimum wage has already been established by the legislature and is reviewed annually.

Set piece-rate wages; Piece rate wages already provide higher than hourly wages, this is a agreement that is beneficial to both the grower and the employee.

Establish requirements for rest breaks, work schedules and working hours; OSHA already has standards for all of these.

Provide uniform training on worker rights by state-certified worker organizations (i.e. unions and trial attorneys); This is not required in other industries.

Establish new workplace health and safety requirements in addition to those already adopted by OR-OSHA. The existing standards already regulate these concerns.

Eliminates at-will employment for agriculture and dictates how farm employers can discipline or terminate workers. HB 2548 creates a private right of action against employers who make termination or disciplinary decisions that an employee or trial attorney disagrees with. Again why should agriculture be different than other Oregon industries.

There is now a -2 amendment that has been introduced. This amendment stacks the Workforce Standards Board with OR-OSHA bureaucrats and plaintiffs' attorney groups to ensure that worker groups have the ability to establish their wish-list of regulations and wages. It allows workers to claim emotional damages for failure to comply with all the new requirements and only allows prevailing plaintiffs to collect attorney fees. In short, there is no disincentive for frivolous litigation; this bill all but guarantees that outcome.

Lastly, I pose this question, do the agricultural workers of Oregon want to be unionized and represented by a board that they have no participation in?

PCUN was established in 1985, in 40 years, they have registered 6,000 members, in 2023 alone there were 52,300 agricultural employees in Oregon. Is this truly a bill that the agricultural workforce wants? Or is it something that PCUN and trial attorneys want. I can tell you from personal conversations with agricultural workers that they do not want to unionize, they do not want an unelected board representing

them, they are not in favor of this bill.

Why is agriculture as an industry being targeted? Shouldn't the same workforce rules apply across the whole state, to all industries and types of businesses?

I humbly encourage you to vote NO on HB 2548!!!

John Zielinski

Salem Oregon