



March 12, 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of HB 2548 -2, which would establish a Farmworkers Labor Standards Board.**

My name is Alberto Gallegos and I am providing testimony on behalf of SEIU Oregon, which is composed of two locals: Local 503 and Local 49. Together, we represent over 85,000 workers in Oregon and SW Washington.

Farmworkers have historically been left out of the conversations that shape their industry. Unlike other workers, they have had no formal way to advocate for themselves, and no seat at the table when decisions are made about their wages, working conditions, and protections. This isn't by accident—it's the result of a system that has deliberately excluded them since the 1930s, when many other industries were granted labor protections. Farmworkers have had to fight uphill for the same basic rights, benefits, and protections that so many of us take for granted.

Despite being essential to our economy, contributing over \$6.8 billion annually, farmworkers in Oregon earn an average of just \$34,500 per year. They endure harsh working conditions, face wage theft, lack access to legal protections, and are often subject to retaliation when they speak up. And because BOLI, OSHA, and other agencies aren't fully funded, farmworkers have no formal structure to enforce fair standards, these injustices persist.

These are workers—many of them immigrants, many of them people of color—who have built their lives in Oregon, who contribute to our communities, and who are simply asking for fairness, for a voice, and for the ability to shape the industry they have dedicated their lives to.

In the labor movement, we say: "if you're not at the table, you're on the menu." And farmworkers have been on the menu for far too long. A Farmworker Standards Board changes that by bringing workers together with employers and policymakers to set real, enforceable standards—just as we've seen in other industries across the country. New York's farm laborers, Seattle's domestic workers, and Minnesota's nursing home staff have all benefited from this model, proving that when workers have a voice, entire industries become stronger, more stable, and more equitable.

This bill has the full backing of the Fair Shot for All coalition, which is made up of labor unions, racial justice organizations, and community groups fighting for economic justice. Farmworkers



## Service Employees International Union – Oregon State Council

aren't asking for special treatment—they're asking for what they've earned, and for what others already have.

By passing HB 2548 -2, Oregon can finally take a stand and ensure that the people who put food on our tables have a voice in shaping their own future, and are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

SEIU Oregon strongly urges this committee to pass HB 2548 -2. Thank you for your time.

Thank you,

Alberto Gallegos  
Political and Government Relations Organizer  
SEIU Oregon State Council