

Submitter: Mary Howells
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2548
TO: House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards
FROM: Mary Howells
SUBJECT: Yes on HB 2548 -2

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

My name is Mary Howells, I live in Albany, OR and I am writing in strong support of HB 2548 -2 to create a Farmworker Standards Board in Oregon.

There are over 72,000 Oregon farmworkers, who put food on our tables and contribute over \$6.8B to our state's economy, yet they experience poor working conditions and earn an average of just \$34,500 annually. Most farmworkers are immigrants from Mexico, Guatemala, and Central America, many of whom speak an Indigenous language.

HB 2548 -2 will give historically excluded workers their first voice in setting industry standards with real enforcement power and accountability. The board will ensure access to fair wages, safe conditions, and protection from retaliation.

Cities and states across the country have proven that workforce standards boards work. These boards bring workers together with industry and public representatives to set meaningful standards, with real enforcement power to ensure accountability. From New York's farm laborers to Minnesota's nursing home staff to Seattle's domestic workers, these boards give workers the voice and protections they deserve and give our communities the essential food we need.

Why do I want this bill to pass? Because I do not want to buy produce that came into my possession via exploited labor. Because every single person has the right to safe labor conditions. Because farmworkers are no less deserving of fair wages than any other worker.

I urge you to vote YES on HB 2548 -2 to create a Farmworker Standards Board and give farmworkers the ability to set standards for the industry.

Sincerely,
Mary Howells