

TO: House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards
FROM: Yadira Perez Lozano
SUBJECT: Yes on HB 2548 -2

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

My name is Yadira, I live in Hillsboro 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.

Farmworkers are the backbone to our country who are severely underpaid for their hard labor and expertise in working with various crops. We should not have farmworkers working in unfair and unsustainable conditions. I hope that people are able to see this as a chance to break the power imbalance farmworkers currently face. It is equitable for farmworkers to be at the decision making table to advocate for themselves. This would be a step in creating long-lasting relationships where both sides can come to an agreement on liveable and protected working conditions. This is not a win-lose situation, all stakeholders will have a voice in the decisions that the Farmworker Standards Board will make and that is something we should be in full support of.

I stand with the philosophy that everyone deserves to earn a living wage regardless of their occupation. Based on MIT's living wage calculator, you should be earning at least \$25.17 an hour to afford basic necessities in Oregon. That hourly wage comes out to about \$52,000 annually which is a difference of \$17,000 when compared to the annual average earnings of a farmworker. With the rising costs of food, housing, and essential goods, it is unacceptable that the very people who sustain us are struggling to survive.

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,
Yadira