

TO: House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards

FROM: Seth Johnstone

SUBJECT: Yes on HB 2548 -2

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

My name is Seth Johnstone, I work for Basic Rights Oregon and I am writing in strong support of HB 2548 -2 to create a Farmworker Standards Board in Oregon, as part of the Fair Shot Coalition.

HB 2548 -2 will give historically excluded workers their first voice in setting industry standards with real enforcement power and accountability. It will establish industry-wide protections that address issues like pay, health and safety, and workforce sustainability.

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.

Workforce standards boards are not a new concept. They've been successfully implemented in other states across the country over the last several years. 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.

We 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.