

Submitter: Ryan Elizabeth
On Behalf Of: Urban Farms
Committee: House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2548

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

My name is Ryan Elizabeth, I live in Portland and I am writing in strong support of HB 2548 -2 to create a Farmworker Standards Board in Oregon. I am a Farm Manager at an urban farm, and owner of a small plant focused business. I am friends with and do business with dozens of farmers in the Portland metro area.

In Oregon alone, over 72 thousand farmworkers contribute over \$6.8B to this state's economy, feed our families, and work extreme hours in some of the poorest working conditions in this country. Most farm workers are lucky to be able to make a living wage, and as a farmer myself, I can attest to the kind of grueling work farming entails that then barely pays ever increasing bills at home. It is quite literally back breaking work. Most of our farmworkers out in the fields on large scale farmers are immigrants from Mexico, Guatemala, and Central America. HB 2548 -2 will give systemically excluded workers their first voice EVER in setting industry standards that actually enforcement power and accountability. The board will ensure access to fair wages, safe conditions, and protection from retaliation.

In an increasingly hotter world, we cannot expect people to be able to physically work in extreme heat with few to no breaks, no legal protections, and very little money to feed themselves or take care of their physical health. And let us not pretend that anyone who is originally born and raised in this country (like myself) would be able to withstand such treatment for long either; those of us with caring, compassionate bosses are among the few and far between.

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.

If you can't show you care about farmworker's well-being, I imagine some part of you can care about having food on your table, about feeding yourself and your family; which we will have less of in the near future without protections for the very mortal human beings growing and picking it.

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

Sincerely,
Ryan Elizabeth