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March 19, 2025

House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Testimony In Support of HB 2541: Extending Protections for Farmworker Women to Express Breastmilk in the Workplace

Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Elmer & Muñoz, and members of the House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards,

I am pleased to submit testimony in support of HB 2541 - a bill to protect farmworker women expressing milk in the workplace.

Farmworker women employed as hand harvest or pruning laborers are excluded from milk expression in essential workplace protections per [ORS 653.077](#).

This statute requires employers to provide rest periods and a location for employees with children under 18 months to express milk.

But it excludes the following workers from the protections listed above:

An individual who:

- Is employed as a hand harvest or pruning laborer and is paid on a piece-rate basis in an operation which has been, and is customarily and generally recognized as having been, paid on a piece-rate basis in the region of employment;
- Commutes daily from a permanent residence to the farm on which the individual is so employed and
- Has been employed in agricultural labor for less than 13 weeks during the preceding

Without these protections, mothers may struggle to maintain breastfeeding, which can lead to health complications for both mother and child, such as increased illness rates for formula-fed

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infants and stress for mothers trying to
Pumping at work can be difficult for

balance work and breastfeeding needs¹.
mothers.

A recent survey revealed that only 40% had both break time and a private space to express milk. Those with these accommodations were 2.3 times more likely to breastfeed exclusively at six months and 1.5 times more likely to continue each month compared to those without access.² Breastfed babies tend to have stronger immune systems, fewer illnesses, and reduced healthcare costs. Additionally, mothers who can express milk at work are less likely to experience complications such as clogged milk ducts or mastitis, conditions that can negatively affect their health.³

HB 2541 extends the protections listed in [ORS 653.077](#) for the expression of milk in the workplace to include individuals who meet the following criteria:

- (A) they are employed as hand harvest or pruning laborers and are paid on a piece-rate basis in operations that are recognized as such in the region;
- (B) they commute daily from a permanent residence to the farm and
- (C) they have been employed in agricultural labor for less than 13 weeks during the preceding period.

Extending these protections promotes a healthier work environment, benefiting families, employers, and the agricultural sector.

I urge your support of HB 2541 and to move it out of committee.

Thank you,

Andrea Valderrama
State Representative
HD 47 (Outer East Portland)

¹ Oregon Health Authority, *Breastfeeding Rates and Data*, accessed 3/19/25.

<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/HEALTHYPEOPLEFAMILIES/BABIES/BREASTFEEDING/Pages/data.aspx>

² Kozhimannil KB, Jou J, Gjerdingen DK, and McGovern PM, "Access to workplace accommodations to support breastfeeding after passage of the Affordable Care Act," *Womens Health Issues*. 2016; 26(1):6-13.

³ Breastfeeding and the Workplace - A Resource for Employers, 5/14/19, accessed 3/19/25.
<https://massbreastfeeding.org/breastfeeding-and-the-workplace-a-resource-for-employers/>